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GENERAL ASSEMBLY

PROVISIONAL VERBATIM RECORD OF THE 13th MEETING

Held at Headquarters, New York,
on Friday, 27 September 1991, at 3 p.m.

President:	Mr. SHIHABI	(Saudi Arabia)
later:	Mr. TRAXLER (Vice-President)	(Italy)
later:	Mr. SHIHABI	(Saudi Arabia)
later:	Mr. ROGERS (Vice-President)	(Belize)

- Address by Mr. Jorge Serrano Elias, Constitutional President of the Republic of Guatemala

- General debate [9] (continued)

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This record contains the original text of speeches delivered in English and interpretations of speeches in the other languages. The final text will be printed in the Official Records of the General Assembly.

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Statements made by

Mr. Collins (Ireland)

Mr. Hussein (Iraq)

Mr. Alatas (Indonesia)

Mr. Samaras (Greece)

Mrs. Bongo (Gabon)

Mrs. de St. Jorre (Seychelles)

The meeting was called to order at 3.20 p.m.

ADDRESS BY MR. JORGE SERRANO ELIAS, CONSTITUTIONAL PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF GUATEMALA

The PRESIDENT (interpretation from Arabic): The Assembly will first hear an address by the Constitutional President of the Republic of Guatemala.

Mr. Jorge Serrano Elias, Constitutional President of the Republic of Guatemala, was escorted into the General Assembly Hall.

The PRESIDENT (interpretation from Arabic): On behalf of the General Assembly, I have the honour to welcome to the United Nations the Constitutional President of the Republic of Guatemala, His Excellency Mr. Jorge Serrano Elias, and to invite him to address the Assembly.

President SERRANO ELIAS (interpretation from Spanish): It is truly an honour for me to address a body that embraces all the countries of the world - the United Nations. I come to this forum representing the beloved and much-tried people of Guatemala - a people which, throughout its history, has remained faithful to its ideals of freedom and to the unswerving struggle for its advancement, but which, at the same time, has had to face a fierce onslaught of violence of all kinds that has placed unfair limits on its development. Nevertheless, our people has maintained its faith and trust in a better future, and its fighting spirit in pursuing what it deems to be fair and necessary.

On behalf of that people, I should like to state before the Assembly that we have rejoiced in the end of the cold war, from which no country on Earth has been free. Every country has been a victim of its consequences, for in many areas of the world, that war became a bloody battle that has brought sorrow and mourning to thousands of homes in the second half of the century. That is true of my beloved Guatemala.

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Allow me, Sir, on behalf of the people and the Government of Guatemala to congratulate you on your election as President of the General Assembly at this session and to pledge the Guatemalan delegation's fullest cooperation. We are confident that your experience in the areas that are the responsibility of the United Nations will be crucial in achieving agreements that will be of benefit to the international community as a whole.

Allow me, at the same time, to congratulate Ambassador Guido de Marco for the very efficient work he carried out as President of the previous session.

I wish also to pay a most particular tribute to Mr. Javier Perez de Cuellar, a distinguished son of Latin America, who has guided the work of the Organization for the last 10 years. We are all aware of his tireless endeavours to promote peace and the peaceful settlement of disputes. This dear friend of ours has given a fresh impetus to this world Organization as a centre for negotiation and the settlement of political problems, as reflected in the expansion of peace-keeping operations. He has repeatedly called attention to the economic, social and political problems that affect the entire world, particularly the developing countries. This has lent increasing credibility to multilateralism and, in particular, to the United Nations itself. His activities in Central America, together with those of the regional organization, have been invaluable in support of dialogue and negotiation as means of putting an end to regional tensions and domestic conflicts.

I am gratified to see that the United Nations today has been strengthened by the entry of new Members. We extend the warmest welcome to the Republic of Korea, with which we have long-standing ties of friendship and cooperation; to the Democratic People's Republic of Korea; to the Federated States of

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Micronesia; and to the Marshall Islands. Moreover, we are pleased to greet in this forum the independent nations of the Baltic Republics of Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania. We hope that their recent independence will bring well-being and prosperity to their peoples. Guatemala extends to them its friendship, respect and understanding.

We are aware that a new international political reality has emerged, one that, we trust, will also be reflected in a new economic and social reality. We firmly believe that a new order is now dawning which, we hope, will not be based on arrogance and the abuse of power, but rather on the established principles of international law, the self-determination of peoples and non-intervention, taking these principles in the broad sense, not as indifference or isolation of one nation's realities from another, but as a new expression of solidarity among the peoples and nations of the world. In other words, whatever this order may be that is now being developed, it must have as its overriding objective the avoidance of the outbreak of fresh conflicts, such as may be inherent in a North-South confrontation, which can only be avoided through understanding and support from those who have more and can do more for those who have less and can do less.

We also believe that all the leaders of the world may finally understand once and for all that freedom and dignity are not abstract concepts or gifts from States to individuals or nations. Rather, both of these concepts are innate in human beings, and no dictatorship thus far, whatever its shape or political persuasion, has been able to inculcate in individuals or nations the meaning of those two noble aspirations.

We recognize that to date mankind has found in pluralist, representative and participatory democracy the system that best guarantees dignity and

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freedom to the individual and thus respect for all his rights, which are fully established in universal declarations emanating both from this Organization and from others that have shown constant concern for his full development and assumed responsibility for taking an active part in the ongoing processes of establishing the legitimacy of national States and regulating the relationships among them.

Now more than ever, the United Nations is shouldering the great responsibility of realistically seeking practical solutions making it possible for the peoples of the world to develop and consolidate their independence and satisfy their aspirations for progress and development as solid bases for peace for many generations to come. These aspirations have been expressed in the Organization since its very inception, since the Tehran Conference, when an anguished world was seeking an answer to war and was more than ever aware of the need to work for international peace and security.

However, despite the Organization's considerable efforts, the generations of the post-war era have been beset by many national and international conflicts.

At the present time, we hail events and trends, such as the end of the cold war, political solutions to regional conflicts, the consolidation of democratic processes and the progressive development of market economies - all of which represent new possibilities for the promotion of peace and the well-being of mankind.

We believe that the new political climate in relations between important blocs, which until recently were adversaries, has had constructive effects in the world and enables us to define a broader and more fully integrated dimension of international security. This is the time for the traditional

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concept of security to be superceded, and for the promotion of political, economic and social conditions that will reduce the risk of confrontation and guarantee peace and economic and social stability everywhere to be embraced.

In the economic field, it is necessary that adjustment policies and policies of transition to market economies in the developing countries lead to the promotion of genuinely free trade, without protectionism, involving the major production sectors in the developed countries. A new international order requires us not to continue the contradiction between the growing accession of developing countries to the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT) and the resistance of the developed countries to submit to GATT procedures.

International trade continues to stagnate, because it is bogged down by protectionist measures that impose restrictions on access to the developed countries' markets, by the production and export of subsidized products and by the imposition of quotas and price fixing. That is why the eighth session of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development must identify the policies that need to be followed in future in the light of the developing countries' expectations.

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Hence it is necessary for the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) at its eighth session to define the policies that need to be followed in the future in the light of the expectations of the developing countries.

In the social area, the new international agenda must necessarily include intensive discussion of means to promote social development, without which there can be no peace or well-being for mankind. We therefore support the holding of the world summit on social development proposed by President Aylwin of Chile. Clearly, the political progress that we are now witnessing is not being accompanied by social progress, which would offset the very heavy cost of the deterioration of the quality of life in the developing countries.

It is also imperative for the United Nations and the international community to continue the vital task of halting the arms race, in particular in the nuclear, chemical and biological fields and, indeed, in any field which involves mass destruction and for them to endeavour to utilize the tremendous investment involved for the purposes of economic and social development for human beings and for their well-being in general.

Allow me now to share with all the peoples represented here some aspects of our national life and of the Government which I have presided over for the last eight months - to share with you some achievements and concerns, some aspirations and results. I am sure that from a knowledge of our experience there will come stronger links of solidarity and understanding between our peoples.

For more than 30 years, we in Guatemala have been facing a domestic struggle which has placed limits on our possibilities for development and has brought mourning and sorrow to our people. Today, I am gratified to inform

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the General Assembly that on 9 April - only three months after taking office - I put before the whole nation a comprehensive peace initiative, with a view to finding a course of action which, without any discrimination whatsoever, could unite Guatemalans in a common project which would enable us as a people to realize our potential to the full.

This initiative is based on the concept that peace is not simply the absence of war or of conflict, but that peace should be envisioned as a state that enables people to live and develop without fear, without anguish and without threats, free from persecution, free from anything which might limit them in achieving the objectives that they may set themselves within their own capacities.

This initiative, which seeks to achieve total and lasting peace, in addition to seeking the end of the armed struggle, also seeks to lay the basis for reconciliation and harmonious coexistence within the Guatemalan family on the basis of four essential points.

First, termination of the armed struggle through serious negotiations which would set up programmes and procedures that would make it possible to put an end to the insurgency and the counter-insurgency, and at the same time promote ways of ensuring full respect for human rights, so that every Guatemalan, whether part of the insurgency or not, may fully enjoy the rights enshrined in the Constitution of the Republic and receive the appropriate safeguards that will enable him to develop his political capacity in a spirit of respect and freedom. We believe that this first step is fundamental in order to guarantee to those populations displaced by violence - both refugees and displaced persons - the necessary social, economic and political security to enable them to be legally reintegrated into the life of the country.

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Secondly, there must be greater economic and social equity. We recognize the need to strengthen and broaden all public and private programmes designed to combat extreme poverty and destitution, to speed up the modernization of our economy and to find viable and prompt solutions to the problems of education, health and social assistance and insurance because what we are spending now in maintaining the conflict, is money that our people urgently needs in order to solve its problems. Social and economic peace is a basic condition for the enjoyment of total peace.

Thirdly, there must be respect for, and strengthening of the rule of law. This element constitutes one of the greatest challenges facing our society, which has suffered for years under a dictatorship and autocracy, and in which there is a vital need to eliminate, once and for all, impunity as a regular procedure and to establish the rule of law and respect for human rights. This presents us with a great challenge - the need to strengthen monetary control, to increase professional training and reform our civil policies and, above all, the need to improve judicial procedures involved in the administration of justice.

Fourthly, there needs to be an expansion of the democratic process. We have made substantial progress in improving the country's democratic institutions and in strengthening the political system as a form of social coexistence. However, there is a need to continue to improve political and social institutions so as to enable the people to organize, in an informed manner, and to participate freely in an ongoing decision-making process taking into account the characteristics of our various cultural differences.

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Fortunately, the whole peace initiative embodied in these four points has received a positive national response as well as international recognition. We have taken basic steps towards ensuring that, as we optimistically hope, we can face the challenge of changing the course of our history and replacing a culture of war by a culture of peace, justice and freedom.

Our efforts have taken concrete shape in the form of a direct dialogue between the Government of the Republic and the insurgency forces, which has already yielded its first fruits in the various meetings that have already been held. After 30 years of confrontation, dialogue has finally begun and offers the hope that the guns may fall silent and ideas at long last be heard.

As a matter of elementary justice, I should like to acknowledge the valiant and steady efforts which the National Commission for the Reconciliation of Guatemala devoted to the peace process and the prudent and constructive role played by the United Nations in monitoring the process, which will, we hope - after the final agreement is signed - very soon evolve into an important function of verifying compliance with the agreement.

In the quest for social understandings, the Government of the Republic has drawn up a social compact in which business, labour and cooperative sectors participated and - despite the vicissitudes that it has faced - this process has yielded results which have served to establish fundamental national agreements and to secure the economic and social equity to which we have referred.

In the field of human rights, we are now waging an outright struggle against impunity, introducing substantial reforms in our juridical system and judicial procedures. At the same time, within the existing systems, we have taken firm action to punish violations. This is beginning to invert the

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trends of the past and allows us to look forward with optimism to the possibility of establishing a regime of trust in the country.

I wish to take this opportunity to express my Government's satisfaction at the understanding that we have met with in this field from the international community, which has encouraged us in our efforts by its attitude of assistance and cooperation, which is resulting in the strengthening of national institutions responsible for ensuring compliance with the law and respect for human rights. I should like here to make special mention of the advice and services that we have received in this area from the United Nations. My Government considers this to be of such vital importance that, since we took office eight months ago, we have paid special attention to each and every one of the recommendations made to us by the expert adviser, Mr. Christian Tomuschat, whose guidance was so timely and useful.

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I could not fail on this occasion to refer to an aspect that is an integral part of the policies of our Government, which seeks to ensure that indigenous communities in Guatemala have enjoyment of their rights and are adequately guaranteed opportunities which the Constitution of the Republic grants to all Guatemalans, without any discrimination. These policies are specifically directed towards recognizing and protecting the integrity of the social values, practices and cultural identity of the Maya peoples and towards respectfully and objectively supporting the processes of change within these cultures themselves, including the strengthening and development of substantive juridical provisions which are proper to those communities and which recognize their traditional modes of life in the ways in which they are organized and in which they resolve conflicts among them.

It is a fundamental aspiration of my Government to ensure better political participation by the indigenous peoples at all levels, particularly at the local, grassroots, municipal and regional levels. We are in the course of completing consultations with the various Maya ethnic groups with a view to the ratification of Agreement 169, on indigenous and tribal peoples in independent countries, adopted by the International Labour Organisation. This Agreement includes fundamental elements of legal trusteeship which, together with the provisions of domestic law, will provide greater protection to the indigenous peoples for their conditions of employment.

In addition to the social and economic problems facing the country, we are now seeing an accelerated depletion of our natural resources, a large part of which are used by the majority sectors of our population to meet, among other things, its basic energy needs. This process of depletion and neglect has systematically worsened the environmental situation and may in a few years lead us into an ecological crisis that will affect not only our country but

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the ecological systems of the world, especially because of its impact on the Maya biosphere zone.

From this rostrum I appeal for international solidarity to provide support for the specific policies we have been promoting, designed to make adequate, economic protection of our environment compatible with rational exploitation of our natural resources.

There is another matter of great concern that must be added to our traditional problems - namely, drugs and drug trafficking, which have rapidly taken on such proportions that they threaten the very essence of the democratic State; indeed, the tremendous amounts of money generated by that trade lead to the corruption of institutions in such small and fragile economies as ours. In this field, when national efforts are patently insufficient, it is not enough just to raise the conscience of the individual citizen; international cooperation is also needed, precisely because drug trafficking takes advantage of the great international imbalances and the poverty of regions where drugs have taken hold.

Our State has been exerting great efforts to combat drug trafficking. It has undertaken legislative reforms to secure better tools to fight this scourge; important bilateral and multilateral agreements of cooperation have been signed. In addition, it has strictly applied the international treaties to which it has subscribed in order to combat drug trafficking. This endeavour demonstrates our people's real concern over the scourge of drug consumption, especially in the developed countries, and particularly among the young people. This is an example of the universal solidarity that should exist among all peoples of the world.

In this context, our Government also expresses its concern over the situation of orphans and destitute and homeless children and appeals for

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international cooperation to ensure that the rights enshrined in the Convention on the Rights of the Child are truly put into effect in all countries. Guatemala has embarked on its own path in this respect and is pooling its efforts with those of national and international organizations, both public and private, in order to provide for the well-being of children and the future they deserve.

In another area, our Government has established a clear policy of rapprochement and integration with other countries. In this respect I should like to express our satisfaction at the reincorporation of Honduras in the framework Treaty of Central American economic integration and at the genuine possibility of expanding the Central America of Five to a Central America of Seven, with the inclusion of Panama and Belize. Substantial steps have been taken towards our ultimate goal. We have already signed wide-ranging agreements on free trade with El Salvador, Honduras, Venezuela and Colombia, and we hope that in the near future we shall be able to expand similar relations with other countries of the region.

I should like to conclude this statement with the following, which, for my Government, represents an act of faith in the international community and in fundamental human rights and also clear testimony to our unswerving dedication to peace: Guatemala, in conformity with its policy of respect for human rights in all areas, has taken the fundamental step of expressly recognizing, in strict adherence to international law, the right to self-determination of the people of Belize, thus opening the way to the final ending of a conflict that in its last phase dates back to 1859. This step has been documented in the Treaty on frontiers signed by the State of Guatemala and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland. We hope that the Guatemalan decision in this matter will be appreciated in all its

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dimensions by the international community, because of its importance both for our country and for the peace of the region as a whole, and that the international community will support us in our endeavour to ensure that this persistent conflict is resolved within the framework of international law. Recognition of the State of Belize and the establishment of diplomatic relations will enable us to settle the dispute in a civilized way. I would, however, make it clear that this territorial dispute, which still exists, should not in any way constitute an obstacle to harmony and rapprochement between our peoples or to the cooperation and mutual support that should prevail between the two nations.

Finally, I should like to place it on record, before the eyes of the world, that Guatemala will firmly and resolutely support, regardless of what it may cost us, any initiative that will promote the process of peace in any region of the world where it may be necessary. For, to quote the Gospel,

> "Blessed be the peacemakers; for they shall be called the children of God". (The Holy Bible, Matthew 5:9)

Blessed, therefore, be this Organization, which has striven, is striving and will continue to strive to achieve peace.

The PRESIDENT (interpretation from Arabic): On behalf of the General Assembly, I wish to thank the Constitutional President of the Republic of Guatemala for the statement he has just made.

Mr. Jorge Serrano Elias, Constitutional President of the Republic of Guatemala, was escorted from the General Assembly Hall.*

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* Mr. Traxler (Italy), Vice-President, took the Chair.

AGENDA ITEM 9 (continued)

GENERAL DEBATE

Mr. COLLINS (Ireland): I offer my warm congratulations to Ambassador Samir Shihabi and to his country, Saudi Arabia, on his election to the office of President of the General Assembly. We are pleased that his experience and skill will guide our deliberations at this session as the United Nations enters a particularly crucial stage in its history.

I should like also to pay a tribute to our Secretary-General, Mr. Javier Perez de Cuellar, whose statesmanship and wise leadership have guided the United Nations over the past tumultuous decade.

At this session we welcome seven new Members to the United Nations: the Republic of Korea and the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, the Republics of Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania, the Marshall Islands and the Federated States of Micronesia.

Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania have, after more than 50 years, regained their sovereignty and independence. We in Ireland have sympathy and admiration for the courage they have shown in seeking, by peaceful means, the realization of their aspirations. We are happy that these efforts have borne fruit.

A year ago, as the crisis mounted in the Gulf, many of us who spoke from this rostrum wondered if the United Nations had the capacity and the will to meet the challenge. We feared that the things that had hampered the Organization in the past and prevented it from making and keeping peace might do so again; that the new determination to make the United Nations work, and the spirit of cooperation evident in recent years, might break under the strain of conflict. It did not happen. The will of the international

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community prevailed over one State's aggressive and expansionist ambitions. The price was tragically high in blood shed and lives shattered. One lesson is clear. A united international community acting on the precepts in the Charter can overcome acts of aggression. But there is another conclusion and a more fundamental challenge: to eliminate the causes of conflict, to build confidence, to prevent aggression; to avoid the dreadful paradox whereby lives are lost in the pursuit of peace.

Twelve months later we can say that our Organization is in a stronger position to take up this task. We can hope and work for a system of collective security that will protect the weak against the strong, for a system of law and justice and order between nations. That this is possible is due in the first place to the end of the cold war. For all of us who welcomed the end of the wasted and dangerous years of East-West confrontation and the potential this offered for international cooperation, the attempted coup in the Soviet Union presented a grave threat. It put at risk not only the future of democracy and human rights in that country but our hopes for a new era of international solidarity. Thankfully, the effort was unsuccessful. We salute the determination of the people of Moscow, St. Petersburg and other cities throughout the Soviet Union to defend, with their lives if necessary, their new liberties and their hopes for the future. I believe, too, that the international community, by calling for the restoration of legality and by affording moral support and encouragement to those who opposed the coup, also contributed to its defeat. I wish the peoples of the Soviet Union well in their efforts to evolve new political and economic structures founded on the Charter of Paris, including democracy based on respect for human rights, the rule of law and social justice. They have asked for our support and our help. We must respond.

(Mr. Collins, Ireland)

We are at the beginning of a new era in international life. The building together of a better future is more clearly before our eyes than at any time in the history of the United Nations. We know what we want to achieve. Our objectives are there in the Charter agreed almost half a century ago - to end war, to protect the dignity and worth of the individual, to ensure freedom and the rule of law, and to promote economic development. Simple and clear precepts. How can we give them effect?

First, we must harness the new mood and dynamism in international life and bring it to bear on the great global challenges facing mankind: disarmament, human rights, the environment, development. These, too, are essential for international peace and security. They are areas in which all of us have a vital interest and where none can act alone.

Secondly, we must ensure that the fullest use is made of the peace-making and peace-keeping potential of the United Nations to resolve regional conflicts. We have seen what can be done in Angola, Cambodia, Namibia and Western Sahara. Our successes and experience there should encourage us to persevere elsewhere.

Thirdly, we must make this Organization more responsive and more efficient in its working. What the Secretary-General, in his eloquent report, describes as the renaissance of the United Nations must be consolidated. We should now begin a process of analysis and consultation designed to ensure that the United Nations system as a whole functions with maximum efficiency.

(Mr. Collins, Ireland)

Without respect for human rights other achievements can hold little value. The starting point of all political activity has to be the recognition of the dignity and worth of each individual human being. It is on this that true freedom and democracy rest. We have seen in Eastern Europe and elsewhere how indomitable the human spirit can be and how irresistible is the pressure for change when a whole people acting in solidarity with each other demand an end to the needless sacrifice of individual human lives to a State system or a political ideology.

The growing willingness to use legitimate pressure at the international level to protect and promote human rights is based in the first instance on a concern for the victims. But it is also a matter of common interest to all nations. We are coming to appreciate that wherever there is tyranny, it is impossible to conduct international relations in a spirit of openness, confidence, and trust.

Human rights are indivisible. To be a victim of hunger, illness, illiteracy is to be deprived of basic economic and social rights. In recent times we have become more aware, I believe, of the link between respect for human rights and economic development, which flourishes best in a context of individual creativity, responsible government and social justice. Repression is no recipe for economic and social progress.

The realization by many of the peoples of Central and Eastern Europe of their aspirations to freedom and democracy has brought to the fore the question of how in turn the aspirations of minorities are to be addressed. This is a complex question to which there are no simple answers. Clearly, there is a duty incumbent on Governments to ensure that members of minorities can enjoy in full the basic human rights common to all. Where special

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protection is needed it should be forthcoming. But beyond this, there is an urgent need for the international community to work out principles to serve as a framework within which conflicting aspirations can be resolved peacefully and through negotiation.

Ireland welcomes the opportunity to review developments in the field of human rights at the World Conference in 1993. An essential foundation for further progress is that the major human rights instruments should be accepted and implemented by all States.

No issue more clearly illustrates our mutual interdependence than the environment. We have a shared responsibility for the ecosystem on which life on this planet depends. The agenda here is truly daunting. We must promote sustainable development based on equal partnership with developing countries. We must tackle the issue of climate change. We must protect our natural resources, such as forests and water. These issues are highly technical, but their resolution will require political leadership of the highest order.

Ireland, with its partners in the European Community, is determined to make the fullest contribution to next year's United Nations Conference on Environment and Development in Brazil - the Earth Summit. We are glad that as part of the preparations, Dublin will be the site for an international Conference on Water and the Environment to take place next January.

I know that some developing countries are concerned that recent events in international life, in particular the war in the Gulf and the revolutions in Eastern Europe, could turn our attention away from the challenge of development. But development is essential to peace and security and requires our dedicated efforts. We must give priority to the alleviation of poverty, to the elimination of famine, to equitable economic relations, to the

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relationship between the environment and development, and to the problems of indebtedness.

Next year's eighth Conference of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) will give the international community a valuable opportunity to form an over-all picture of the global economic situation. Ireland believes that the approach must be comprehensive and based on consensus. UNCTAD provides a forum for the achievement of these aims.

In the meantime, we look to an early and balanced agreement within the Uruguay Round.

The 12 member States of the European Community will submit proposals at this session of the General Assembly aimed at strengthening the capacity of the United Nations to respond with emergency assistance to situations of the kind we have seen, for example, in the wake of flooding or drought. We see this as part of the wider effort to empower and update the United Nations.

Events in the past year have again underlined the urgent need for progress in disarmament and arms control. We are fortunate that with necessity goes opportunity. As divisions end in Europe, and in the aftermath of the Gulf War, the outlook is more promising.

The signature by the United States and the Soviet Union of the Strategic Arms Limitation Treaty and the recent announcements by France and China of their intention to adhere to the Non-Proliferation Treaty, as well as the accessions to it of South Africa, Tanzania and Zimbabwe, greatly strengthen the international regime of nuclear non-proliferation.

The recent undertakings given by several countries to abolish their chemical weapons stocks are welcome. They will encourage developments in the field of conventional arms control and will underpin the belief that there is

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a new political will to achieve progress in disarmament. My Government believes that fresh and more urgent consideration should be given to the proposal, which Ireland has long supported, for a comprehensive nuclear-test-ban treaty. We hope there will be widespread support from Member States of all regions for the proposal to establish a United Nations arms register, which the 12 member States of the European Community are presenting at this year's session.

Human rights, the environment, development and disarmament are some of the areas in which, designing on a broad canvas, we hope to foster a world order more accountable to reason and more responsive to considerations of justice. There are also many specific situations in which we must try to bring to bear the spirit and experience of the United Nations.

The Arab-Israeli conflict involves two great historical traditions - noble peoples that have been blown before the winds of history. It is hard to imagine any single development that would be more welcome to the international community than a just and comprehensive solution to the Arab-Israeli conflict and the Palestinian question on the basis of United Nations Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973) and the principle of land for peace. The end of the Gulf War has given a strong impulse to the search for a settlement. Ireland supports the dedicated efforts of United States Secretary of State James Baker. As a member of the European Community, we will actively contribute to the success of the peace conference.

We want to see full respect for the human rights of the Palestinian people and an improvement in their economic and social conditions. The establishment of settlements in the occupied territories is illegal and must be ended.

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For the first time in 15 years there is hope of progress in Lebanon. We rejoice at the recent release of hostages and renew our appeal for the immediate release of those still held captive.

In Iraq, we expect the authorities to respect fully and to comply with the resolutions of the Security Council. They must not obstruct the efforts of the United Nations teams to carry out the mandate given to them by the international community.

In South Africa, the apartheid system is an affront to reason and human dignity. The removal of the legislative pillars of the system has opened the way for substantive negotiations on a new constitutional order.

(Mr. Collins, Ireland)

These important measures must be followed by the elimination in practice of all racial discrimination and by an improvement of the position of the disinherited. It is now for the parties to bring about the context in which negotiations will have the best prospects for success. Among other factors it will be important for all parties to implement in full the national peace accord signed on 14 September. I look forward to the day when a new, democratic, united and non-racial South Africa plays its full part on the stage of African and world affairs.

The United Nations plan for peace in Cambodia offers the best guarantee of a just, durable and comprehensive settlement of that conflict. The ultimate goal must be to ensure for the Cambodian people a future in which they enjoy true peace and security, free from any threat of a return to past policies and practices and above all of the genocide which has outraged the conscience of mankind.

We welcome the admission of both the Republic of Korea and the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to membership of the United Nations as well as the reopening of direct political dialogue between North Korea and South Korea. I urge North Korea to implement all Non-Proliferation Treaty obligations without delay, notably the International Atomic Energy Agency Safeguards Agreement.

The past year has seen significant developments in Central America, not least because of the invaluable role played by the Secretary-General. There are now excellent prospects for an end to armed conflict in El Salvador and Guatemala. The day is approaching when all the countries of Central America will be able to focus their political energies on the strengthening of democracy and of economic and social progress, in a context of increasing regional cooperation and full respect for human rights.

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For some months the European Community and its member States have sought a peaceful and lasting solution to the crisis in Yugoslavia which would protect the rights of all in Yugoslavia and take full account of their legitimate concerns and aspirations. To this end the Community has negotiated cease-fires in Slovenia and Croatia and has dispatched a monitor mission to oversee their implementation. Most recently the European Community has convened a peace conference under the chairmanship of Lord Peter Carrington with the participation of the Yugoslav parties. Ireland has fully supported these moves and is participating in the monitor mission.

Our involvement in the European Community's efforts underlines our long-standing commitment to the peaceful resolution of conflict and our readiness to assist, in ways that are open to us, in reaching a peaceful solution of crises in the international arena.

With its partners in the European Community and other Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe (CSCE) participating States, Ireland is willing to look at additional steps that might be taken in concert with the parties to the Yugoslav conflict to create a stable background to the peace conference. We welcome in particular the measures adopted on Wednesday by the Security Council which give the backing and authority of this world Organization to the effort we are making to resolve this dangerous and complex conflict.

In his report the Secretary-General has said that never before have so many new insights been gained about the varied tasks of keeping, making or building the peace in areas riven or threatened by conflict. The experiences in Namibia, in Haiti, and in Central America, as well as the new operations in

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the Western Sahara and Angola, would have been beyond the reach of the United Nations in any other era. Of the 22 United Nations peace-keeping operations launched since its inception, almost half have been established in the past three years.

Since Ireland's first involvement, in 1958, it has contributed over 33,000 personnel to United Nations service. Our soldiers currently serve in nine operations and our civilian police are preparing for service in two of them. We believe that the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon still has a vital contribution to make to stability in South Lebanon.

Last year I said that proper funding of United Nations peace-keeping operations was essential. That is a point widely understood and accepted. Let us find a solution and ensure that it is no longer an issue of contention among us.

In our approach to the problem of Northern Ireland we seek the peaceful and voluntary reconciliation of two conflicting traditions. It follows that we are opposed, as a matter of fundamental principle, to all recourse to violence, and we will continue to use all the resources at our disposal to counter the efforts of those who resort to it. Such methods are deeply undemocratic and morally repugnant. They cannot succeed because they are based on the mistaken assumption that a solution can be found through coercion. The aim of the Irish Government is rather to build on what unites both traditions in Ireland and on the shared interest of the Irish and British peoples to bring peace and reconciliation. In this it has the support of the vast majority of the Irish people.

It is common ground between the Irish and British Governments that a solution must be based on the totality of relationships within Northern

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Ireland, between North and South in the island of Ireland, and between the islands of Ireland and Great Britain. The Anglo-Irish Agreement, signed in 1985, was a development of this approach. Since coming into force it has provided a valuable mechanism of cooperation between the two Governments on a wide range of issues relating to Northern Ireland. These include the eradication of discrimination in whatever guise it may exist, but particularly in employment practices; even-handedness in the behaviour of the security forces and in the administration of justice; respect for human rights and the rule of law; and equality of esteem and treatment for both traditions.

We attach importance also to the role of the Anglo-Irish Agreement in the economic and social sectors. It has enhanced cross-border cooperation in these areas in recent years. Overall, progress has been made, even if much still remains to be achieved. We will continue to utilize fully the structures of the Agreement to this end in the period ahead.

The Anglo-Irish Agreement has been of particular value in identifying common elements in the approach of both Governments to Northern Ireland and in formalizing cooperation between them. These achievements must be preserved. However, the Unionist community in Northern Ireland has continued to reject the Agreement which it sees as a threat to its interests. Our concern now is to promote a political dialogue which will involve it as well as the two Governments and all those political parties in Northern Ireland which are committed to progress exclusively through political means. We have made clear that we are willing to work for a new agreement which would give full expression to all of the relationships of which I have spoken and which would therefore transcend the existing Agreement.

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During the past year, tentative steps were taken towards getting such a dialogue under way. Last March the two Governments and the elected leaders of democratic parties in Northern Ireland agreed on a set of negotiating structures corresponding to the three critical relationships. In the event the opportunity eluded us. There was some progress. But despite all efforts to offer reassurance, the mistrust which for so long has corroded relationships on our island once again prevailed.

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There is now a general concern, which we fully share, that whatever fragile progress was made in recent months should be preserved. For its part, the Irish Government is determined to seek to move forward as imaginatively as possible in the period ahead, and we are ready, if necessary, to envisage new avenues of approach. Our openness is conditioned only by the requirement that the common objective must be not to undermine what has been achieved but to build a durable settlement. We do not underestimate the complexities but we believe that the search for a solution must be sustained. There can be false pessimism no less than false optimism.

There are, I believe, factors at work for progress. The strong tide of public support in both communities for the process of dialogue is a sign of hope. The relationship between the Irish and British Governments, always a critical factor, is one of increasing cooperation and commitment to address this difficult remaining legacy of our common past.

The European Community provides a positive, wider context. It is at once a model of how ancient enmities can be overcome and a practical arrangement which will progressively diminish the impact of political borders within its ambit. Elsewhere in Europe, far-reaching attempts are under way to confront other historical legacies of great complexity. The prevalent mood of change must encourage those in Ireland who wish to escape from the entrenched attitudes of the past and who seek, as we do, a transformation of relationships which will bring lasting peace.

The Foreign Minister of the Netherlands has already spoken in the name of the 12 member States of the European Community of the major challenges confronting our world today. I fully endorse his statement. It is his earnest hope - and my earnest hope - that this Assembly can move forward in

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unison, casting aside the division and recrimination of yesteryear. As President Roosevelt so eloquently said in March 1945, the United Nations:

> "Ought to spell the end of the system of unilateral action, the power and exclusive alliances, the spheres of influence, the balances of power and all the other expedients that have been tried for centuries - and have always failed."

Mr. HUSSEIN (Iraq) (interpretation from Arabic): I present to Mr. Shihabi my most sincere congratulations on his election to the presidency of the General Assembly at its forty-sixth session. I am certain that his experience and ability will guide us to fruitful results.

I also take this opportunity to extend my felicitations to the new States Members of the United Nations, wishing them progress and success in the service of the United Nations Charter and its objectives. In the meantime, I look forward to the day on which the State of Palestine will become a full-fledged Member of the United Nations.

While stressing the importance of compliance with the principles of the Charter, Iraq reiterates the necessity of implementing its provisions equitably, without discrimination, and in a manner that would not allow one single State or small group of States to control the destiny of any other State on the premise that might is right and by exerting all sorts of pressure to influence the decisions of this Organization. Unless the provisions of the Charter and international law itself are implemented in a just manner on the basis of equity, they will become instruments of suppression and divisiveness.

We believe, therefore, that we are called upon today more than ever before to strengthen the role of the General Assembly at a time when the world is witnessing rapid developments that have marginalized the role of the United

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Nations in the search for solutions to the issues emanating from those developments. This holds true, of course, only in so far as the big five permanent members of the Security Council do not see it in their interests to give the United Nations a role or to use it as a cover for some act of so-called international legitimacy. In that regard, we point to the decision adopted by the tenth meeting of the Foreign Ministers of the Non-Aligned Movement, which was held in Accra, the capital of Ghana during the first week of this month. That decision states that:

> "Additionally, the emerging tendencies towards a unipolar world characterized by new elements in the increasingly complex international political landscape could limit the prospects of resolving the global problems of today, as the interests and needs of the non-aligned and other developing countries are not taken into due account."

On 23 September, we listened to the address delivered by United States President Bush to the General Assembly. We cannot but express our regret that a President of a State - indeed, the biggest Power - would resort to unseemly attacks on the President of my country in a manner incompatible with diplomatic practice.

In that context, if we were to call the United States President names as he allowed himself to do to my President, we would wonder what to call one who killed women, children and the elderly with his planes and missiles, and who bombarded the Amiria shelter, killing even more women and children. What could we call one who gave the orders to bury Iraqi soldiers alive, whose forces targeted baby food factories, or who insists on depriving a population of 18 million of food, medicine, and all other means of livelihood? We leave the answer to the international community and the United Nations.

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Notwithstanding the United States President's repeated assertions that he does not want the Iraqi people to suffer from famine, food shortages or a lack of the basic requirements of civilian life, the fact remains that the United States Administration is responsible above all others for the suffering of the Iraqi people. The United States President went beyond the provisions of the relevant Security Council resolutions in seeking to dictate to the Council that the sanctions against Iraq should not be lifted until the political system of Iraq is changed. Thus he ignores the provisions of Security Council resolutions and flouts the provisions of the United Nations Charter to which he has claimed to be committed and determined to implement in this new era in international relations.

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The continuation of the inhuman embargo against Iraq and its people in spite of the Iraqi acceptance of all Security Council resolutions is a flagrant exploitation of the suffering of the Iraqi people for purely political aims. While we draw attention to the clear double standards employed by the United States in its policy towards Iraq, we must underline these double standards as reflected in the speech of the United States President. While he completely ignored the question of Palestine, the Israeli occupation of Palestinian and other Arab territories and the deprivation of the Palestinian people of their human and national rights and the right of self-determination, the United States President chose to propagate the false claim that Zionism is not a political movement. This statement shows either that the President of the United States does not comprehend the nature of the Zionist movement or that he is deliberately altering the facts and rewriting history in order to satisfy Israel and the Zionist lobby.

Iraq has been subjected, in the name of international legitimacy and under the pretext of upholding it, to a deliberate full-scale destruction of all aspects of life. The facts about the events preceding the attack on Iraq have confirmed the premeditated intentions of the Powers which perpetrated this destruction to weaken Iraq, undermine its sovereignty and humiliate its people, especially after Iraq had come out of an eight-year war stronger and with greater regional and international weight than ever before. The rulers of Kuwait were chosen to conspire with the West, and with the United States in particular, to destroy the Iraqi economy as the first phase of a design for the total destruction of Iraq. All efforts exerted by Iraq and the Arab States and all the warnings candidly voiced by Iraq to them, with a view to persuade them to desist from the great harm they were inflicting upon the

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Iraqi people, went unheeded. In fact, they delved more deeply into their arrogant hostility and further increased their collusion through the suspect oil policy they pursued. Their aim was to bring Iraq to its knees, break the will of its people, and starve its children, women and elderly. The declared objective of the United States and its allies, which meant to prepare for and justify their aggression against Iraq, was initially the so-called defence of Saudi Arabia. Then the objective became the ejection of Iraqi forces from Kuwait. Yet the military operations planned and carried out for the supposed liberation of Kuwait did not begin in Kuwait. The aggression was initiated on 17 January 1991, with a full-scale campaign of air bombardment whose targets were the economic infrastructure and civilian residential centres everywhere in Iraq. This resulted in the destruction of power plants, power transmission systems, oil refineries, bridges, irrigation regulators, water purification centres, factories, hospitals, schools, places of worship, infant-milk factories, grain silos and civilian shelters.

The destruction of the Amiriya civilian shelter targeted by the criminal allied war planes, in which 319 civilians, mainly children, women and elderly people, lost their lives in the fire or through suffocation, stands out as an example of the barbarity perpetrated against Iraq. Were these targets on the Kuwait front? Did the Security Council adopt resolution 678 (1990) to achieve these objectives and to put Iraq on the brink of a comprehensive calamity, the victim of which is the civilian population, especially children, women and the elderly? The allied air raids, led by the United States, dropped in an uninterrupted manner over a period of 43 days, about 100,000 tons of explosives on cities and villages everywhere in Iraq, from north to south and from east to west. Were all these cities and villages front-line military

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targets on the Kuwaiti front? Did the liberation of Kuwait require the destruction of Iraq?

Neither Security Council resolution 687 (1990) nor any of the resolutions adopted prior to it authorizes the United States of America and its allies to destroy Iraq. No one in his right mind could accept that destruction of all Iraqi civilian installations was the only way to force the Iraqi forces out of Kuwait. The battlefront itself witnessed the worst of United States ignominy and cowardice when the Americans chose to use tank ploughs to bury thousands of Iraqi soldiers alive in their trenches instead of having to fight them on the battlefield. Pentagon sources have admitted the actual perpetration of this abject operation when the story was published in the United States press on 12 September instant.

We call upon the international community through this forum and through the other regional and international organizations to condemn that criminal act, investigate it and hold its perpetrators fully responsible. We also call upon the International Committee of the Red Cross to conduct an investigation of the matter and take the measures necessary for the bodies of our martyrs to be brought home.

That is one example of the practices employed by the United States, in violation of all known military principles, to achieve their so-called victory over the valiant soldiers of Iraq.

It is worth stating that Mr. Perez de Cuellar, the Secretary-General of the United Nations, pointed out in his annual report this year, dated 6 September 1991, that the measures taken to use force were not carried out exactly in accordance with Chapter VII of the United Nations Charter, for the Security Council

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"authorized the use of force on a national and coalition basis" (A/46/1, p. 6)

rather than by the United Nations itself. The Secretary-General stressed the necessity

"that the rule of proportionality in the employment of armed force is observed and the rules of humanitarian law applicable in armed conflicts are complied with" (ibid.).

The Secretary-General also pointed out in his report the importance that the human effect of sanctions on the population of the State subject to such sanctions need to be carefully borne in mind.

Having completed the withdrawal of its forces from Kuwait, Iraq declared both its acceptance of the resolutions issued by the Security Council and its commitment to their implementation.

With regard to resolution 687 (1991), which effected the cease-fire, and further to the withdrawal of the Iraqi forces from Kuwaiti territory, all Kuwaiti prisoners of war and detainees have been released and repatriated along with all third-country nationals, while the operation to return Kuwaiti properties is being continued. As regards the other paragraphs, the resolution entrusts the United Nations with the task of pursuing their implementation, and the United Nations is doing so with the full cooperation of the Iraqi authorities.

Kuwait, however, as part of its efforts to ensure the continued imposition of the economic blockade upon the people of Iraq, along with the continued presence of the United States forces in the region, raises, from time to time, claims that are both baseless and untrue. Kuwait claims, for instance, that Iraq still detains a number of Kuwaiti civilians; and I want to

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stress from this rostrum that Iraq has returned all military Kuwaiti prisoners of war under the supervision of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC). In fact, since 4 March 1991, 6,328 Kuwaitis have been returned. The only ones remaining are 17 Kuwaitis, already registered with ICRC and awaiting a decision from Kuwaiti authorities to receive them. Iraq has also submitted to ICRC a list of 3,536 Kuwaitis - constituting 606 families present in Iraq - in addition to another list of 159 other Kuwaitis.

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The Kuwaiti side has not accepted the return of more than 170 of these registered Kuwaitis. Thus, it is the Kuwaiti authorities that bear full responsibility for obstructing the return of these Kuwaitis, who are registered with ICRC. Iraq has also advised the United Nations Secretary-General and the Secretary-General of the League of Arab States as per its official memoranda dated 28 August 1991, in detail, of these facts and reiterated its willingness to cooperate with the Red Cross for all Kuwaitis present in Iraq to be delivered to the Kuwaiti side. We have also asked the United Nations and the League of Arab States to urge the Kuwaiti side to agree to receive these nationals.

Furthermore, Iraq has requested the Secretary-General of the League of Arab States to send a mission of investigation to ascertain the actual facts of this question. The Secretary-General of the League of Arab States has granted this request and the mission arrived in Baghdad two days ago. The Iraqi authorities will cooperate fully with the Arab League mission in order for the truth of the matter to be known.

Another chapter of Kuwaiti claims has been the episode of an alleged Iraqi military landing in Bubiyan Island, over which Kuwait made a tremendous political and propaganda noise. Kuwait filed a complaint with the Security Council, leading some Western countries and their allies to rush to condemn Iraq in the light of the allegations. Then, as soon as the investigations into the Kuwaiti claims were completed by the United Nations Iraq-Kuwait observation mission, the whole thing turned out to be a Kuwaiti hoax. Through allegations of this kind, the rulers of Kuwait want to ensure that the United States forces would be kept stationed in the region for as long as possible. The reports of the team of observers, as mentioned in the reports of the Secretariat of 23 September 1991, on the cease-fire between Iraq and Kuwait,

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attest to the adherence and cooperation of the Iraqi authorities with the team and the fact that there are no violations of the cease-fire by the Iraqi side whereas there are violations by the Kuwaiti forces.

On the other hand, the United States and its allies persist in their insistence on continuing the economic blockade against Iraq and the extortionist efforts aimed at burdening Iraq with the costs of destroying its own weapons and of establishing the compensation fund. In the meantime, more than 18 million Iraqis are being deprived of their food and medicine and, consequently, exposed to famine and deadly epidemics. The first victims amongst them are the children of Iraq. This has, in fact, been stressed by such United Nations missions as those headed by Assistant Secretary-General Martti Ahtisaari and Prince Sadruddin Aga Khan, the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, the joint mission of the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and the World Health Organization (WHO), the Harvard University team and ICRC.

The countries which raise the slogans of liberty, democracy and human rights are the very countries which indulge in the most heinous violations of the most basic human rights when they prevent the supply of foodstuffs, medical needs and other civilian materials to the people of Iraq. By imposing this blockade upon Iraq and its people they clearly violate international human-rights conventions, such as the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, the Declaration of the Rights of the Child, the 1948 Declaration of Human Rights and, particularly, the Fourth Geneva Convention of 1949 and the Protocol annexed to it, all of which prohibit actions preventing food and medicine from reaching civilians, even in a situation of ongoing war. The Protocol also prohibits the starving of civilians for war objectives.

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Security Council resolution 706 (1991) goes in the opposite direction to the proposals made in the reports of the United Nations missions that visited Iraq. This resolution does not seek to alleviate the suffering of the Iraqi people by meeting their humanitarian needs so much as it tries to exploit the needs and suffering in order to impose such restrictions upon the Iraqi economy as have no precedent in history. This constitutes an infringement of the sovereignty of Iraq and interference in its internal affairs, in violation of the United Nations Charter and of all norms and rules of international law.

Security Council resolution 706 (1991) seeks, in effect, to maintain indefinitely the imposition of the economic blockade, which is contrary to the provisions contained in paragraph 22 of Security Council resolution 687 (1991). Security Council resolution 706 (1991) considers it sufficient to give Iraq the very minimum of its food and medical needs - enough only to prevent people from being starved to death - without allowing Iraq to engage in the reconstruction required to undo the horrible destruction inflicted by the military aggression upon its economy in the fields of agriculture, irrigation, communications, bridges, health care and the oil industry.

Security Council resolution 706 (1991) seeks, in fact, to pressurize Iraq into relinquishing its oil resources to the control of the forces of aggression and placing its economic requirements and monetary policy hostage to the will of a small group of States that has assigned to itself the role of guardian of the people of Iraq, cancelling the role of the country's Government and drawing out for this purpose a mechanism that is impossible to implement.

Hence, Security Council resolution 706 (1991), which was originally meant to meet the economic and humanitarian needs of Iraq and its people, has turned out to run counter to the Charter of the United Nations and to impose foreign

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hegemony over the independent will of the people of Iraq. Furthermore, this resolution torpedoes the provisions of Security Council resolution 687 (1991) permitting Iraq to purchase foodstuffs, medicines and other civilian needs without hegemony or interference.

It is relevant to refer here to the wide media fuss raised over the last few days concerning the group of observers currently in Iraq, headed by Mr. David Kay. In this respect, I must mention the following facts. The formula for the submission of documents and other material by the observer teams requires that the documents and material be registered in the record signed by both parties. Moreover, materials are to be described and photographed in order to prevent any tampering with or additions to originals. But, in fact, the inspection team insisted on seizing large quantities of documents without complying with the proper procedures. Furthermore, from the beginning the head of the team refused to comply with these procedures. As if the havoc that he had wreaked were not sufficient, he went so far as to try to seize the personal files of employees in the field of energy. These files included only addresses, photographs and personal details.

On the one hand, this has no basis in the relevant Security Council resolutions, and goes far beyond the functions of the inspection team; on the other hand, it jeopardizes the lives of these officials, as the files will inevitably fall into the hands of foreign intelligence organizations and, consequently, reach the Israeli Mossad. It is well known that this criminal agency targeted, and even assassinated, a number of workers in the atomic energy industry in Iraq.

Lastly, it behoves me to state that the present inspection team is headed by David Kay, who made this fuss. It was he who made a similar fuss against Iraq last June.

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The other 12 groups of inspectors to visit Iraq completed their work quietly and expressed their appreciation for the cooperation of the Iraqi authorities. The repetition of events in this a manner and their timing - at the beginning of the General Assembly session, when a climate could be created sympathetic to the Iraqi people and its cause, a climate that could favour lifting the economic blockade from our children, elderly people and women - shows that the team's intention was to create a tense, anti-Iraq climate. This confirms what we have said before, namely that this person is following tendentious instructions that are not in consonance with the functions with which the United Nations has entrusted him.

What we have seen of the so-called new world order clearly suggests that it is going to be a unipolar order which ignores the needs and interests of developing countries. It will be an order established on the basis of positions and decisions dictated by one country or a handful of countries, positions and decisions designed to suit the narrow interests of those countries in a selective double-standard manner alien to the principles of justice and fairness enshrined in the United Nations Charter.

What we have seen so far of the features of that new world order are no more than flagrant practices of interference in the internal affairs of other States, massive disregard for the rights of the Palestinian people, who continue to live under foreign occupation and control, and selective policies permitting certain countries to arm themselves with the weapons of their choice, including nuclear and other weapons of mass destruction, while on the other hand imposing a total embargo on other countries.

There are many examples of the double-standard criteria adopted by some States, led by the United States. I shall confine myself to an example

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relating to Iraq. When Iraq takes measures to protect security and stability within its territory against the murder, pillage and sabotage perpetrated by bands of infiltrators, traitors and foreign agents, Western forces interfere, even militarily, to protect those terrorists. Yet, when Turkey launches military raids and offensives inside Iraqi territory, on the pretext of attacking saboteurs and terrorists who had fled from Turkey, the United States, in statements by its top officials, declares its support for such action.

As for the question of Palestine, it is the most flagrant example in this respect. While many countries call for the implementation of international legitimacy and try to hide their illegitimate acts against Iraq behind that slogan, some of them continue to ignore the rights of the Palestinian people while United Nations resolutions on the Palestinian issue remain unimplemented and while the forces of Zionist occupation continue their policy of annexing occupied Arab lands, build settlements on them, carry out schemes for Jewish immigration and employ the ugliest methods of repression against helpless men, women and children.

Justice, fairness and the principles of the United Nations Charter demand that the international community stand by the Palestinian people in its plea for the right of self-determination on its own Palestinian soil, like any other people that regained its independence, and for the chance to exercise its undeniable, inalienable rights and to establish an independent State, under the leadership of the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO), its sole legitimate representative.

But today, we are witnessing attempts to marginalize the role of the United Nations and ignore its decisions aimed at finding a solution to the

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Palestinian question. The United Nations must play a major effective role in this sphere and in the implementation of its resolutions on the Palestinian issue. The first thing that must be implemented is Israel's withdrawal from all occupied Palestinian territories, including Holy Al-Quds, and all the other Arab territories. There must also be a halt to the mass immigration of Jews from the Soviet Union and other countries and their settlement in occupied Palestine.

Any measures that ignore the fact that the Palestine Liberation Organization is the sole legitimate representative of the Palestinian people would be tantamount to an attempt to impose a solution on the Palestinian people from outside; that we must not accept.

We stress that Iraq's principled position is to support the Palestinian people, led by the PLO, in its struggle to regain all its inalienable rights. That principled Iraqi position, coupled with the strong resolve of the people and the leadership of Iraq to confront Zionist and imperialist schemes which target the future of the Palestinian people and the Arab nation as a whole, prompted Zionist and imperialist circles, and those allied to and colluding with them to launch their 30-State aggression aimed at destroying Iraq and its capabilities.

At the conclusion of my statement, I want to draw the attention of Member States to the fundamental goal of the founding of this Organization: to preserve the sovereignty of peoples over their territories and safeguard their right to live in freedom and dignity.

The Assembly is now faced with the tragic human situation that has befallen the people of Iraq, which has been making a considerable contribution to progress, justice and humanity for more than 6,000 years. That people is

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facing the spectre of the worst kind of starvation and disease as a result of the unjust economic blockade, whose first victims are children, women, the elderly and other innocent civilians.

Therefore, this Organization, whose Charter promotes the dignity of the individual, faces a test of its conscience and humanity. History will make its judgement in the light of how the United Nations conducts itself and how its addresses this tragic situation.*

Mr. ALATAS (Indonesia): It gives me great pleasure, Sir, to extend to you my congratulations and those of the Indonesian delegation on your election to the presidency of the forty-sixth session of the General Assembly. We are gratified that the stewardship of this session has been entrusted to a seasoned diplomat and an eminent representative of a fraternal Asian country with which Indonesia has always enjoyed traditionally close and friendly relations. Your elevation to your high office is both apt recognition of your personal qualities and a reflection of the enhanced role and stature of Saudi Arabia in world affairs.

To your predecessor, His Excellency Mr. Guido de Marco, I should like to convey our deep appreciation and respect for the excellent manner in which he directed our work during a very eventful year.

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* The President returned to the Chair.

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It is with a sense of genuine satisfaction that Indonesia welcomes the accession of the Republic of Korea and the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to full membership in the United Nations. We believe that this decision will contribute to bringing their shared aspiration to unification closer to realization. Let me also add my sincere felicitations to our near neighbours in the Pacific, the Republic of the Marshall Islands and the Federated States of Micronesia. Indonesia looks forward to fostering close and mutually beneficial relations with them. We are equally pleased to welcome Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania in our midst and to congratulate them on having deservedly regained their rightful place in the ranks of sovereign nations.

We are at a unique juncture in history, a moment of both opportunity and challenge as never before presented to us since the end of the Second World War.

The momentous transformation of East-West relations has brought an end to the cold war, thus releasing human and material resources which for so long were tied down in ideological rivalry, bloc politics and confrontation. The fundamental changes and powerful new trends currently permeating the global scene have given rise to revived hopes for a new era in international relations, greater peace and more equitably spread prosperity in the world.

The past year has seen the further consolidation of major-Power rapprochement and cooperation, including efforts towards the resolution and defusing of regional conflicts and tensions. A renewed confidence in the efficacy of multilateralism in addressing global problems has resulted in a welcome revindication of the value and role of the United Nations. On the erstwhile dangerously divided continent of Europe, the processes of coalescence and integration have gained further momentum. Concurrently, deepening interdependence and globalization in the world economy are

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propelling the need for more rational, equitable and mutually beneficial cooperation between nations.

Yet it is obvious that transformed East-West relations alone have not removed, and cannot be expected to remove, all incidences and causes of conflict in the world. The recent Gulf crisis and the complexities in dealing with its aftermath are a poignant reminder of the fragility of the present international security situation.

The bright prospects and opportunities implicit in the improved global political climate continue to be sharply contrasted with the emergence of new, and the persistence of old, problems, unprecedented challenges, pervasive uncertainties and unresolved inequities. Simmering tensions and violent conflicts, ethnic strife and religious contention still plague many regions and countries of the world. The last vestiges of colonialism and institutionalized racism have yet to be erased from the fabric of inter-State and inter-personal relations. The trend towards integration among States is simultaneously accompanied by deeply disturbing phenomena of disintegration of States and of societies, in Europe as well as in various parts of the developing world.

The positive transformations in the political domain have yet to find their corresponding reflection in the economic sphere, where unrelieved disparities and unacceptable injustices continue to aggravate North-South relations. Thus it would appear that the world is still uneasily suspended between old concepts and new realities and the perceived battle-line still drawn between the threatened privilege of the rich and the threatened survival of the poor.

The dawning of a new era in international relations has led to renewed hopes of constructing a new system of global governance and a new world order

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of stable peace, common security and sustainable development. But if the pursuit of this objective is to achieve legitimacy and acceptance by the international community as a whole, then it cannot but be based on the recognition of the United Nations as its centrepiece. Such a new international order must be firmly rooted in the fundamental principles of the United Nations Charter and organized on the precepts of universality and sovereign equality, encompassing all nations - large and small, strong and weak, alike. For it is only through equitably shared responsibility and a joint commitment to global cooperation and solidarity that we can hope to manage the massive changes that are at present transforming international relations. Moreover, lasting peace and stable security cannot be achieved unless the concept of security itself is expanded to embrace such non-military threats as structural underdevelopment and mass poverty, large-scale unemployment and cross-border migration, resource scarcity and severe environmental degradation.

In short, if we are to build a viable new world order, then its architecture and management must be comprehensively conceived and not be made dependent on the military and economic might of individual countries or groups of countries. It should be a new world order dedicated to peace as well as justice, to security as well as development, to democracy both within and among States, and to the promotion of the fundamental rights of nations as well as of the individual human being.

The changing patterns of relationships between the major Powers will inevitably lead us towards a new, global security environment, no longer anchored in the bi-polarism of East-West contention, but much more complex in its mutual interactions and, for some time to come, less predictable in its evolution. The transitional period can therefore be expected to be marked by

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inherent fluidity and instability. In these conditions, the need to redouble efforts in the field of arms limitation and disarmament assumes added importance and urgency.

We are encouraged by the substantive progress that has been made since last year. We welcomed the Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe, although we realize that the restraints embodied in it are still confined to but one, albeit vital, region of the world. We likewise welcomed the strategic arms agreement reached last month between the United States and the Soviet Union, mandating a substantial reduction of their nuclear arsenals. China and France have now signified their readiness to adhere to the non-proliferation Treaty, thus removing one of its major shortcomings. The Amendment Conference of the States Parties to the partial test-ban Treaty, held last January, provided a timely boost to efforts to attain the commonly agreed objective of a complete cessation of nuclear testing, and the process is continuing.

The enlarged opportunities now presented to us by the changed global environment should therefore be seized, and sustained efforts need to be deployed to accelerate progress on the priority issues on the disarmament agenda. These include: continuing reductions in nuclear weapons to levels of reasonable sufficiency, as an intermediate step towards their ultimate elimination; the achievement of a treaty banning all nuclear tests by all States in all environments; the prohibition of all weapons of mass destruction; the speedy conclusion of a comprehensive chemical weapons convention; strengthening the effectiveness of the biological weapons Convention; and curbing the excessive build-up and transfer of conventional armaments, taking into account the legitimate security needs of States and involving both supplier and recipient countries.

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Of equally acute concern is the fact that in step with the rapid advances in science and technology, new, more destructive and sophisticated weapons continue to be added to the arsenals of nations even as their numbers are being reduced. It is for this reason that Indonesia has repeatedly stressed the urgent need to address the qualitative aspects of the global arms race. It has been generally acknowledged that the weapons of the future will be more destabilizing, impart greater vulnerability, increase the possibility of war and further complicate efforts to reverse the arms race. Thus, the centrality of technological innovation is pertinent, not only to the qualitative arms race but to international security as well.

While globally a spirit of conciliation prevails, focal points of tension and conflict regrettably persist, notably on the continents of the developing world. Although the imposition of super-Power contention onto these conflicts has now practically disappeared, and antagonists are showing greater receptivity towards dialogue and negotiation, the pace of progress in resolving these conflicts remains slow and uneven.

Armed hostilities in Afghanistan continue, despite the encouraging developments that have recently occurred in the search for a negotiated settlement. The joint decision taken by the United States and the Soviet Union to cease arms supplies to the warring parties was welcome and timely but unfortunately did not stop the fighting. My delegation believes that at this juncture the five-point proposal of the Secretary-General could serve as a useful basis for the initiation of an intra-Afghan dialogue, leading towards the establishment of a broad-based government within a sovereign, independent and non-aligned Afghanistan.

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On the question of Cyprus, a definitive solution remains elusive despite unremitting efforts to arrive at least at a mutually acceptable outline of an overall agreement. We hope that the projected quadripartite, high-level talks between Turkey, Greece and the leaders of the two Cypriot communities will still materialize in the near future and bring us closer to a settlement based on the concept of a bicommunal and bizonal federation.

In South Africa, such legislative pillars of apartheid as the Population Registration Act, the Group Areas Act and the Land Act have been finally torn down. Notwithstanding these laudable developments, the fundamental basis of the apartheid system, particularly its undemocratic Constitution, is still in place and the process of negotiation towards its replacement needs to be accelerated. We are also deeply concerned at the unabated interfactional violence for which the Pretoria regime must be held accountable. Any lifting of sanctions, therefore, should be deferred until the course of fundamental change towards the establishment of a democratic, non-racial South Africa, based on universal suffrage, has become irreversible.

The traumatic crisis that has enveloped the Persian Gulf since August of last year has served as a stark reminder of the volatility of the international security situation, despite major-Power détente. Indonesia is deeply saddened by the extent of the devastation, in terms of the loss of life, the immense suffering and material destruction caused by Iraq's invasion of Kuwait and by the multinational war subsequently waged to redress it. We wholeheartedly welcomed the restoration of Kuwait's sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity and of its legitimate government. But now the international community faces the task of addressing the complex ramifications and problems of the post-war period, including the humanitarian aspects. In

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this task the United Nations has a vital role to play and it must return to centre stage in healing the wounds of war and in restoring stable peace and security on the basis of all relevant Security Council resolutions regarding the entire Middle East region.

The explicit rationale for the Gulf war was to preserve international peace and security and to ensure full compliance with Security Council decisions. It is now time for these standards to be equally and consistently applied to the wider, underlying problems of the region which for so much longer have made the Middle East the powder keg of the world.

We must now turn our urgent attention to the larger issues that have always been at the core of agonizing conflict and enmity in the region, namely, the legitimate struggle of the Palestinian people, under the leadership of the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO), their sole and legitimate representative, to secure their inalienable rights to self-determination and independence in their own homeland; the withdrawal of Israel from all illegally occupied Palestinian and Arab lands, including Jerusalem and the Syrian Arab Golan; and the wider security aspects and needs of all countries of the region.

Israel has now adopted an even more rigid position towards any effort to achieve a peaceful and just resolution of the conflict. In this regard, Indonesia welcomes the current initiative undertaken by the United States to start a restricted peace conference on the basis of Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973) and the principle of land for peace, and we note the constructive response by the Arab countries directly concerned. However, we do have serious misgivings regarding some aspects of the proposed negotiating format, in particular Israel's arrogation of the right to

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determine the nature and composition of Palestinian representation. We continue to believe that ultimately the International Peace Conference on the Middle East, as called for by resolution 38/58 (C), remains the most viable negotiating framework within which all the essential elements for a just settlement could be comprehensively addressed. And to be comprehensive, such a solution should necessarily include the restoration of Syrian sovereignty over the Golan and the complete withdrawal of all Israeli occupation forces from southern Lebanon.

For the past two decades, Cambodia has been the scene of unending conflict and unspeakable human suffering and a source of continuing tension, turmoil and division in South-East Asia. I am deeply gratified to observe that the unremitting efforts to bring an end to the Cambodian tragedy have now reached the final stages.

Since September last year, the pace of the peace process has picked up dramatically, resulting in a number of decisive breakthroughs. As may be recalled, the framework document on a comprehensive political settlement, agreed upon by the five permanent members of the Security Council in August last year, was subsequently accepted in its entirety by the Cambodian parties and endorsed by the international community as a whole. With the support and active contributions of the five permanent members of the Security Council, the representative of the Secretary-General and the Co-Chairmen of the three Working Committees of the Paris Conference on Cambodia, Australia, Canada, India, Japan, Laos and Malaysia, the two Co-Chairmen of the Paris Conference on Cambodia then succeeded in elaborating this framework into a set of full-fledged draft agreements for a comprehensive political settlement. Through intensive negotiations, and at a series of meetings in Jakarta, Paris,

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Pattaya, Beijin, and lastly here in New York, the major contentious points in these draft agreements have now been resolved. Thus the way is open for their eventual adoption and signature at the reconvened Paris Conference.

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Crucial in this process was the progress achieved within the framework of the meetings of the Supreme National Council (SNC) itself, under the astute chairmanship of His Royal Highness Prince Samdech Norodom Sihanouk, which, above all, signified the effective functioning of the SNC and the start of the long-awaited process of national reconciliation.

Although some delicate work in tying up loose ends still remains to be done, it can perhaps be said that at last we can see the light at the end of the tunnel - and this time it is not the light of an onrushing train! Indeed, the presence of Prince Sihanouk and the other members of the Cambodian SNC delegation at this session of the General Assembly is symbolic of this gratifying state of affairs, and we all share the sense of optimism he expressed in his statement before the Assembly yesterday.

Much of the credit should go, first and foremost, to the Cambodian leaders who have demonstrated wisdom and the capacity to put the higher interests of their nation before rancour, recrimination and revenge. But as one who, together with the Association of South-East Asian Nations (ASEAN), has been so intimately involved in the long negotiating process, I should also like to pay tribute to France, as the indefatigable Co-Chairman of the Paris Conference, to the five permanent members of the Security Council for their decisive role and commitment, to the ASEAN countries for their constant support and solidarity, to our Secretary-General and his Special Representative for their invaluable contributions and dedicated perseverance, to all participants in the Paris Conference and indeed to all States Members of the United Nations for their unfailing cooperation and faith.

The past year also witnessed continuing change and transition in the international economy. But, as noted earlier, some of the positive

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developments that are taking place in the political sphere are yet to be reflected in the economic domain.

Expectations that with the amelioration of East-West relations a substantial peace dividend could be reaped, to the particular benefit of the developing countries, have yet to materialize. Earlier hopes that at long last world developments were going to open up vast new opportunities for more-generalized economic progress were subsequently dashed by the outbreak of the Gulf crisis and its aftermath, with all its financial and economic implications.

The Uruguay Round, at its supposedly final meeting in Brussels in December of last year, utterly failed to arrive at a successful conclusion, thus portending increased protectionism and the continuation of severe imbalances and constraints in relations between the industrialized and the developing countries.

Increasing globalization and the rapid advances in science and technology that are drastically altering the patterns of world production and economic and financial interchange indeed offer greater possibilities for common progress. Yet, at the same time they may well have a negative impact on the position of developing countries in terms of comparative advantage, in terms of trade and and in terms of the international division of labour.

It is now also being recognized that the dramatic transformations in the Central and Eastern European economies and the formation of powerful economic groupings among developed countries could have both positive and negative effects on the growth prospects of developing countries. Thus, the elements of uncertainty and unpredictability in world economic developments tend to become even more pronounced.

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These adverse developments, coming on top of the crippling legacy of the decade of the 1980s from which most developing countries have yet to recover, have inevitably compounded the difficulties and dilemmas confronting the developing countries. Of especially grave concern in this context is the continuing critical situation in Africa, where the economic and social deprivations of millions cry out for concerted action.

In the light of these realities, the need to forge a new global consensus and commitment to strengthen international cooperation, and especially to revitalize the economic growth and development of the developing countries, assumes poignant urgency. The sustained economic progress of the North is not possible without the economic growth of the South, for the fate and fortunes of both are now inextricably intertwined.

Durable peace cannot be built solely or primarily on the strength of weapons, but should be rooted in the solid bedrock of economic progress and social justice, both among and within nations. Neither can it be constructed on the shifting sands of uncertainty.

It is also obvious that the need to reactivate the North-South dialogue has now become more pressing than ever. But if we have learned from the frustrating experiences and the causes of prolonged stalemate in the past, such a reactivated dialogue should not any longer be cast in terms of "demands" on the part of the developing countries or misperceived as "charity" on the part of the advanced countries. Rather, it should be based on the imperatives of genuine interdependence, mutuality of interest and mutual benefit. Indonesia remains convinced that, despite the wide diversity in levels of economic development, needs and concerns, both the North and the South share a real and quantifiable interest in seeking open and equitable

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trading and monetary systems; in achieving stable primary-commodity markets at prices remunerative to producers and fair to consumers; in obtaining a comprehensive and durable solution to the debt crisis based on a development-oriented approach; and in ensuring sustainable development through effective international cooperation in environmental protection.*

The threat of irreversible environmental destruction and the resulting impact on mankind's well-being and on development have become a major global concern. Indonesia, which has always been fully supportive of the pressing need for environmental protection, believes that in this undertaking a balanced approach should be maintained. As an issue affecting the entire international community, it is imperative that environmental problems be addressed on the basis of equitably shared responsibility of all countries and that the issue not become a new bone of contention between the North and the South. Neither should it be made an added condition for cooperation in development. This calls for an unprecedented level of both national efforts and international cooperation, including the provision of additional financial resources and access to environmentally sound technologies to the developing countries.

Paradoxically, both affluence and poverty have contributed to environmental degradation. It is now being commonly acknowledged that past and present patterns of development in the industrialized countries have been a major cause of damage to the environment. On the other hand, for the developing countries, overcoming the problems of poverty and population pressures will be essential if they are to pursue environmentally sound and sustainable development.

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* Mr. Rogers (Belize), Vice-President, took the Chair.

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Indonesia deems it a blessing to be the custodian of vast, rich tropical forests, but at the same time it recognizes its special responsibility. Indeed, we are doing our utmost, within our limited material and technological capabilities, to guard against their depletion and to preserve their diverse biological wealth. We should note, however, that not only tropical forests but also, for differing reasons, boreal and temperate forests are seriously threatened. Hence, in pursuing sustainable forest management that would allow for both their preservation and their economic utilization, a global cooperative framework needs to be developed.

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We trust that the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development in Brazil next year will indeed adopt a comprehensive and balanced approach in addressing the broad spectrum of issues on its agenda, including those on climatic change and on hazardous and toxic wastes.

The protection of human rights has of late also become a subject of heightened international attention and concern. But the subject of human rights is, of course, not a new issue. Since 1948, with the adoption of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the Organization has developed a growing corpus of covenants, conventions and other instruments which constitute an international bill of human rights and, in the process, commonly agreed conceptual perceptions, principles and procedures have emerged.

As we all know, two broad categories of human rights can be discerned, namely, civil and political rights, and economic, social and cultural rights. These in turn relate to the rights of the individual and the rights of the community, the society or the nation. The promotion and protection of all these categories of human rights is essential for the full realization of human dignity and for the attainment of the legitimate aspirations of the individual as well as those of society as a whole.

Hence, human rights are indivisible and interrelated, and precisely because human rights are indivisible exclusive emphasis on one category over another cannot be justified. Assessments of the human rights performance of individual States can be made objectively only if all categories are taken into account.

Moreover, indivisibility also implies the need for a balanced relationship between the rights of the individual and those of society, or, put differently, the obligations of individuals to their community or

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society. Such a balance is critical, for its absence can lead to a denial of the rights of the society as a whole and, indeed, can lead to instability and anarchy.

Basic human rights and fundamental freedoms are unquestionably of universal validity. However, it is also commonly agreed that their implementation in the national context should remain the competence and responsibility of each government, while taking into account the complex variety of problems, of diverse value systems and of the different economic, social and cultural realities prevailing in each country. This national competence not only derives from the principle of sovereignty, but is also a logical consequence of the inherent right of nations to their national and cultural identity and to determine their own social and economic systems.

I fully concur with the view of the Secretary-General, as stated in his annual report that:

> "the principle of non-interference with the essential jurisdiction of States cannot be regarded as a protective barrier behind which human rights could be massively or systematically violated with impunity". (A/46/1, p. 10, second paragraph)

But, as he also observes in the same report,

> "maximum caution needs to be exercised lest the defence of human rights becomes a platform for encroaching on the essential domestic jurisdiction of States and eroding their sovereignty. Nothing would be a surer prescription for anarchy than an abuse of this principle". (Ibid., p. 10, penultimate paragraph)

I therefore believe that in the promotion and protection of human rights the basic aim should be to cooperate in raising a common consciousness in the

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international community and to encourage improvements in the observance and protection of these rights, rather than to accuse, to sermonize or to engage in politically motivated campaigns. We should not try to remake the world in our own image, but together we can make the world a more humane, peaceful and equitably prosperous place for all.

Indonesia has consistently endeavoured to adhere to the humanitarian precepts and fundamental human rights and freedoms as embodied in its State philosophy, the Pancasila, its 1945 Constitution, its relevant national laws and regulations, and its age-old culture. Internationally, and as a member of the Commission on Human Rights, Indonesia will continue to work vigorously to ensure that human rights are promoted and protected on the basis of universality, objectivity, indivisibility and non-selectivity.

Drug abuse and illicit trafficking in narcotics, both symptoms and causes of social degeneration, also remain items of major concern on national and international agendas. A global solution based on multilateral cooperation is now emerging. However, problems of drug abuse and other criminal activity will continue to thrive in an environment of socio-economic neglect and stagnation.

In the long term, it is development that offers the hope of successfully addressing social concerns and the opportunity to do so. The idea of convening a world summit for social development therefore merits our serious consideration: it not only would elevate such important issues to the centre of world attention, but would also allow socio-economic questions to be addressed comprehensively.

Efforts at reforming the United Nations have been going on from the very first years after its inception, but, more recently, in the new post-cold-war

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climate, there has been a marked resurgence of interest among the international community in making the world body more effective and more democratic in performing its central functions and in fulfilling the original purposes for which it was created. In this connection, many proposals have been put forward by eminent experts on the subject as well as by various non-governmental organizations. Within the United Nations itself, a number of reforms have already been implemented with a view to improving some of its structures and procedures.

It is clear, however, that more needs to be done if we are to make the United Nations the main instrument of global governance in the new era in international relations that is emerging. The improved relations between the major Powers, as manifested in, inter alia, the new cooperative spirit among the permanent members of the Security Council, present us with a timely opportunity to reconstruct the Charter concept of collective action for peace and security and to fashion it into a workable and effective system of collective security.

Towards this end, the Security Council should be given a broadened mandate and an enlarged agenda so as to enable it to deal with non-military threats to peace and security as well. In addition, the Security Council, in cooperation with the Secretary-General, should develop a capacity for preventive, or anticipatory, diplomacy. In this respect, the Council could convene periodic meetings at a high political level to survey the world scene, identify potential conflict situations and initiate discussions and measures before such situations reach the point of crisis or armed conflict. There is also a widespread feeling that there should be closer coordination and synchronization of actions between the Council and the General Assembly on

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issues affecting the fundamental interests of the entire international community.

A number of proposals have also been made with regard to the functions of the Secretary-General, in particular for a more active role in monitoring and in bringing potentially dangerous situations to the attention of the Security Council within the framework of Article 99 of the Charter. For this purpose, it is widely felt that the Secretary-General should be provided with an improved capacity for gathering timely, accurate and unbiased information.

At the same time, the authority and role of the Economic and Social Council should continue to be strengthened so as to enable it to perform the function originally envisaged by the Charter, namely, to provide overall direction and guidance to Member States and the relevant bodies and agencies within the United Nations system within the framework of its task of policy formulation and coordination in the economic and social fields.

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It is undeniable, however, that all efforts to enhance the role and improve the functioning of the United Nations will come to naught unless underpinned by the commensurate commitment and support, including financial support, of all Member States. The United Nations can only be as effective as its Members will allow it to be and can only succeed if its Members are committed to make it succeed. If Member States continue to use this forum to pursue narrowly conceived interests rather than utilize it as a collective instrument to solve global problems and achieve shared goals and if the nations of the world continue to be torn by conflict and afflicted by mutual mistrust, intolerance and prejudice, then the international bodies they set up can hardly be expected to rise above these shortcomings. Viewed from this perspective, perhaps the more relevant observation to make about the achievements of the United Nations so far is not that it has failed to realize so many of its stated objectives but that, despite inherent limitations, it has nevertheless accomplished so much.

It is also in this light that I should like to take this opportunity to express Indonesia's profound appreciation and indebtedness to our Secretary-General, Mr. Javier Perez de Cuellar, for the wisdom, dedication and consummate skill with which he has guided the work of the Organization during the past decade. In a world of constant turmoil and conflict, he has steered the Organization towards becoming the central point for conciliation and concordance. In laying the groundwork and in sustaining efforts towards finding peaceful and just solutions to the various conflict situations around the globe, much of the credit should go to the United Nations and to the Secretary-General. Rather than the alarming erosion evident when the Secretary-General first assumed office, we now witness a robust renewal of

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faith in the role of the United Nations as the unique, multilateral framework for a new, revitalized international order. The reforms he has instituted and the many proposals he has made on the restructuring of the role and functioning of the United Nations system provide us with a visionary and, at the same time, practicable blueprint for the dynamic adaptation of this world body to the requisites of a rapidly changing world. It is now for us fully to utilize the inherent potential of the Organization in collectively promoting our shared aspirations for a just peace, common security and equitable prosperity for all.

Mr. SAMARAS (Greece): May I offer my warmest congratulations to Ambassador Shihabi on his election to the presidency of the General Assembly. His great skills guarantee the positive results expected of this session. In addition, we are especially pleased to see the representative of a country with which Greece maintains traditional bonds of friendship presiding over the General Assembly.

May I also pay tribute to his predecessor, Mr. Guido de Marco, for the effective manner in which he discharged his functions as President of the General Assembly at its forty-fifth session.

I should also like to join previous speakers in praising the Secretary-General for the tireless efforts he has made in the 10 years he has devoted to the service of our Organization. For a decade, during which the world not only faced great challenges but also underwent historic changes, he has so ably guided the United Nations that today it can perform its duties more effectively.

I should also like to welcome the seven new Members - Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, the Marshall Islands, the Federated States of Micronesia, the

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Republic of Korea and the Democratic People's Republic of Korea - which have joined this world Organization, bringing it closer to full universality.

Moreover, I take this opportunity to welcome the restoration to the Republics of Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania of their rightful independence and sovereignty. I wish them success in overcoming the difficulties they are facing today, as they struggle to reorganize their political and economic structures to benefit their people.

Earlier this week, the Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Netherlands, in his capacity as President of the Council of the European Communities, delivered a statement on behalf of its member States. My Government fully subscribes to the contents of that statement.

Greece is firmly committed to and fully supports the endeavours towards European integration. We believe that the economic and political union that we are currently negotiating in Europe will enhance progress and prosperity not only on the European continent but also in all countries with which the Community engages in trade. The Europe we are envisaging will not only constitute the cornerstone of democracy, stability and peace; it will also be in the forefront in the fight against terrorism and drugs, an area to which my country has been attaching utmost importance.

Since I spoke from this rostrum one year ago, dramatic events have taken place and historic changes have occurred in many parts of the world. The questions that are foremost in my mind are the following: Is the world today a better place than it was one year ago? Have we worked collectively as united nations to make the world a better place than it was when we last met in the General Assembly? And what are the results of the actions we have undertaken to that end?

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The answers are complex. Developments in the last 12 months have not been uniform. Nevertheless, I believe it is safe to say that more people today are in a position to take charge of their respective countries and to improve their lives than was the case one year ago.

The main success of the last year has been the consolidation of the twin principles of democracy and freedom in places where they had already triumphed the previous year, and their irresistible expansion where tyranny held sway only a few months ago. More men and women have joined the community of free peoples. We welcome them, we pay tribute to their struggle and we honour those who had to sacrifice their lives in the battle for freedom, democracy and human rights.

We Greeks take special pride in witnessing the flowering of democracy throughout the world, for this autumn we begin to celebrate the birth of democracy 2,500 years ago in Greece. Long before that, mankind had indeed learned that society could not function without order. But it was also believed that order could not be maintained without despotism. It was the Greeks who discovered that you could have a symbiosis of order and freedom by giving a share of political power to every citizen and making everyone equal before the law. Allow me, therefore, to claim that no one is more pleased than the Greek people that democracy is flourishing now as it never has before.

In fact, the wave of democratization created by reform and free elections in the countries of Central and Eastern Europe gives us hope that a current of reform will spread across the world, and that it will do so in a peaceful way.

In this regard, we welcome the restoration of constitutional order in the Soviet Union, and we hope that the process towards democracy and a market

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economy initiated by President Gorbachev and enhanced by the action of the democratic forces in the Soviet Union will gather new momentum.

The important efforts undertaken by the Soviet leadership to transform Soviet society must be supported, especially by the most developed nations. This assistance will help the Soviet Union to overcome the serious economic difficulties it is facing today, and will lessen social tensions related to its transition to a free market economy.

We note with concern that the internal situation in the Soviet Union has not yet stabilized enough to allow institutions to function effectively. We hope that the Republics will succeed in formulating a new legal framework, on a voluntary basis, to aid the progress of political and economic reform.

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We have started building the post-cold-war order. Its architecture is still being created. But its foundation and its main pillars are already clear: they can be none other than the principles of democracy, freedom, respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms and the rule of law.

Social change through peaceful means is a development associated with the end of the cold war and the resulting relaxation of tensions in the international arena. In an interdependent world, the distinction between the purely internal affairs of a nation and such international concerns as peace and security is becoming increasingly irrelevant. Safeguarding human rights has become an essential part of international relations. The expression of concern about human rights violations can no longer be considered interference in the internal affairs of States. This was recently reaffirmed in the Declaration on Human Rights adopted by the Council of Europe last June in Luxembourg. The transition to democratic forms of government is also becoming a concern that is not confined to individual nations or States.

I wish to pledge the support of the Greek Government to every effort the United Nations will be called upon to make for the promotion of democracy and human rights throughout the world. All peoples setting out on the path to democracy through peaceful means can count on the support of the Greek people who have given the world the concept and the very word "democracy".

To support the ideals of democracy, the Western world must also systematically promote and encourage economic development. Many speakers have already indicated optimum ways in which economic aid and technological assistance can be provided by the richer to the poorer countries of the world. Let me only stress that goodwill and sympathy are not enough. We

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must, at all costs, never allow the old ideological division of East and West to be substituted by a new division of poverty between North and South.

Indeed, in only nine years, 6 billion people will share the Earth with a continuing high rate of population growth, increasing environmental hazards and widespread poverty. The severe economic shocks produced by political developments of the last two and a half years have seriously affected global growth. The Gulf crisis has taken a heavy economic, social and environmental toll on the region. The migrant workers and civilian populations were particularly affected. The interplay between politics, poverty, armed conflict and ineffective policies has intensified, posing new challenges to humanitarian institutions and to world leaders. A global approach is needed to economic, social and environmental problems.

The greatest challenge of the next decade will thus be to strengthen the United Nations system so that it can play a much greater role in providing increased economic opportunities for the developing countries, in improving the global environment and human development, and in addressing emergency situations such as international migration, drugs and AIDS.

Finally, the immediate objective should be to restore growth which would not irreparably destroy the air, the rivers, the forests, the oceans or any other part of nature. The World Conference on Environment and Development, to be held next year in Rio, has raised high hopes in all countries that a consensus will emerge which will strike a balance between environment and development.

In building the future, we must also pursue disarmament, an area in which Europe has provided the first actual proving-ground. We have supported every effort to achieve a reduction of conventional armed forces in Europe and we

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hope that these measures will constitute an enlightening example to other continents. My country has applauded with the rest of the world, the signing, three months ago, of the strategic arms reduction Treaty (START) which will reduce Soviet and American strategic nuclear arsenals by 30 per cent. Finally, Greece is ready to support any measure and effort aimed at strengthening the control, reduction and elimination of weapons of mass destruction.

Several times in the past, the Balkans have been torn apart by divisions and differences, creating the term "Balkanization". Yet, those convulsions have had much wider repercussions beyond the geographical boundaries of the Balkans. In the course of the last few months, a new, potentially dangerous confrontation threatens to reinstate the turbulent history of the Balkans. The crisis in Yugoslavia, partly due to the country's multi-ethnic composition, is threatening peace and stability in the region and beyond.

From the very beginning of the crisis, Greece tried - both through the European Community and other venues - to ensure a peaceful outcome of the crisis. We hope that the peace conference, convened under the European Community's initiative in The Hague, and Lord Carrington's wise guidance, will soon result in a permanent solution. Otherwise, the dangers of a spillover effect of violence will increase dramatically.

Greece is obviously ready to accept any solution which the Yugoslav parties agree to by peaceful means and through dialogue. In this regard we hope that Security Council resolution 713 (1991) will further enhance the efforts undertaken by the European Community to put an end to the bloodshed and bring about a solution to the Yugoslav crisis by agreed procedures.

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Greece is especially pleased that a close neighbour, Albania, is among the countries whose peoples have managed, in the year since the last General Assembly, to break the shackles of totalitarianism and set their country on the road to democracy and freedom.

The dire economic conditions in Albania have sent tens of thousands of refugees to Greece, Italy and other countries. We urge the developed nations of the world to come to the aid of the Albanian people, and we urge the Albanian Government to move quickly with determination, in order to promote economic reforms - especially full property rights - so that its people will be able to support themselves in their own country in the near future. We naturally feel a special concern for the hundreds of thousands of ethnic Greeks in the country and want to see them recover their full political, economic and cultural rights. We seek for them the same rights and privileges that the Albanian Government is asking for ethnic Albanians living outside its borders - no more, no less.

A few months ago, when faced in the Gulf with the most acute crisis of the post-cold-war era, the Governments of the world decided to react through the United Nations to the aggression against Kuwait. Articles of the United Nations Charter, which had been dormant since their inception during the cold-war years, started to come to life as the nations of the world, united in their determination to act collectively and resolutely against aggression, began to use these Articles for the collective restoration of international peace and security. In an unprecedented unity of purpose, the coalition of the international community against the aggressor succeeded in reversing the occupation of Kuwait. The determination and joint action of the Members of

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the United Nations have thus marked the beginning of a new peace-keeping role for this Organization.

Closer to our country, the Middle East continues to be the most explosive region in the world. How unfortunate that the area that has nourished some of the most important civilizations in history and is the birthplace of three major religions, should now sound in the minds of many as a synonym for violence. The most important element of the Middle East problem is indeed the Arab-Israeli conflict. Two of the most ancient peoples in the world, with outstanding contributions to the common heritage of mankind, are pitted against each other. My Government, whose position on the issue is well known and need not be repeated, earnestly hopes that the day will soon come when the prophecy is fulfilled "they shall beat their swords into plowshares" (The Holy Bible, Isaiah 2:4).

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Greece remains committed to a serious and fruitful dialogue with Turkey with a view to overcoming the causes of friction which have created dangerous tensions in the past. This commitment was reiterated at the recent meeting in Paris between Prime Minister Mitsotakis and his Turkish counterpart, Mr. Yilmaz. They agreed to set up working groups to draft an agreement on friendship, cooperation and good-neighbourliness to be signed in Ankara on the occasion of a future visit by the Greek Prime Minister to the Turkish capital. This agreement is designed to create a new climate of confidence between the two nations. In this respect Greece wishes to reiterate its own commitment to the principles of international law and to the peaceful way of settling differences, including recourse to the International Court of Justice.

However, I should add that attempts to improve relations between Greece and Turkey will be adversely affected by the problem of Cyprus if this problem remains unsolved despite the efforts of the Secretary-General to help bring about a just and viable solution in keeping with the relevant resolutions of the United Nations and the high-level agreements of 1977 and 1979.

Cyprus is the only long-standing problem in Europe to remain unresolved. All over Europe dividing lines and walls have been swept aside and foreign troops withdrawn. But in Cyprus the division of the island imposed by force of arms 17 years ago continues. Turkish troops still occupy more than a third of that unfortunate country despite the repeated resolutions of this Assembly as well as those of the Security Council.

As a result nearly 200,000 Greek Cypriots are still refugees in their own country; looting and destruction of the island's cultural heritage is still going on; the influx of settlers from Turkey continues unabated, if not encouraged, by the recent abolition of passports for travel between Turkey and

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the Turkish Cypriot pseudo-State of northern Cyprus. Some 1,600 missing people still remain unaccounted for. This is a completely unacceptable situation that must not be allowed to continue.

A very encouraging development has been the involvement of parties trying to support the Secretary-General's efforts. Last February the President of the European Community launched an initiative to promote a solution of the Cyprus problem in conformity with United Nations resolutions. That initiative was welcomed by Greece and Cyprus, but immediately rejected by Turkey.

Equally heartening is the United States more active involvement in the Cyprus issue which began with President Bush's visits to Greece and Turkey last July. His determination on 2 August asking for a United Nations sponsored meeting in September if adequate progress was made in the meantime nurtured new hopes that the stalemate could be broken.

All hopes were unfortunately deflated at the recent meeting between the Prime Ministers of Greece and Turkey in Paris when all previous positive developments were put on hold. Mr. Yilmaz, retracting the Turkish oral commitments previously made to United Nations and United States officials, denied having granted any concessions on the Cyprus issue and attributed the responsibility for any "misunderstanding" to inaccurate information provided by the representatives of the Secretary-General.

I must reiterate that the key to any solution of the Cyprus issue lies with Ankara. It is imperative that this long-standing problem should at last find its proper and just solution. It must include the strict application of international law, the protection of human rights and the scrupulous implementation of all United Nations resolutions on Cyprus.

(Mr. Samaras, Greece)

In concluding, I would like to reaffirm my country's commitment to the United Nations and to the spirit of international cooperation and solidarity it embodies. In the past two years we Greeks have upgraded our participation in the work of the Organization by becoming troop contributors to the new peace-keeping operations launched by the United Nations. We join forces with other nations of the world and pledge to spare no effort in the quest for world peace and stability.

It is the earnest hope of all the Greek people that, when we address this Assembly next year, at the climax of our year-long celebration of the birth of democracy, there will be unity and communal understanding in Cyprus, peace in the Balkans and the Middle East, and freedom in those corners of the world that remain darkened by despotism. Democracy has taken 25 centuries to spread to all corners of the world, but its total triumph is certain, as it is the best political system ever devised by the mind of man, a gift for all seasons and all nations.

Mrs. BONGO (Gabon) (interpretation from French): It is both a pleasure and an honour for me to speak for the first time from this rostrum of the United Nations. I wish to express the congratulations of the Gabonese delegation to Mr. Samir Shihabi on his brilliant election to the presidency of the forty-sixth session of the General Assembly.

It is clear that his authority, competence and extensive experience of international relations, and in particular of our Organization, represent certain advantages for the complete success of our deliberations. I wish to include in these congratulations his predecessor, Mr. Guido De Marco, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs of Malta, on the energy and effectiveness with which he exercised his functions and which today earn him the recognition of our Organization.

(Mrs. Bongo, Gabon)

I wish also to pay a heartfelt tribute to Mr. Javier Perez de Cuellar, the Secretary-General of the United Nations, for the invaluable work he has carried out at the head of our Organization for the past decade. His intelligence and dedication will indeed considerably strengthen the credibility and prestige of the United Nations.

Lastly, allow me to welcome the delegations of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, the Republic of Korea, the Federated States of Micronesia, the Republic of the Marshall Islands and the Baltic Republics of Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia. The admission of these new Members confirms once again the universal mission of the United Nations.

Rest assured that the delegation of Gabon, which I have the honour to head, is motivated by a constant desire to ensure that this session will lead to positive results.

We surely all have the impression of witnessing an acceleration of history, for the events of recent months have profoundly challenged the major balances that emerged from the Second World War. Let us have no illusions; this is no longer a challenge. These are models which have collapsed and collapsed abruptly.

Let us not rejoice in the failure of some because the threats and imbalances are still evident, not only between the North and the South but also in societies that are referred to as developed.

Dialogue, joint discussion and solidarity are particularly necessary. This is the price for our avoiding the third millennium being an age of confrontation.

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However, the end of the cold war and the "policy of blocs" had been generally perceived with euphoria as real progress of democracy and freedom in the world and as ushering in an age of peace and security. Unfortunately, the many upheavals which occurred in Eastern Europe and the Middle East have, since then, disappointed the great hopes resulting from this evolution. Among all these conflicts, the Gulf conflict, more than any other, has profoundly called these hopes into question. That is why my country welcomes the restoration of the sovereignty of Kuwait and the efforts made by the international community to that end.

In this connection, the search for an overall settlement of the problems in that region, based on respect for the rights of all, is necessary. This does not depend only on the will of the peoples and States of the region. It must commit all those who, for various reasons, have an influence on the behaviour of the different protaganists so as to bring just and lasting peace to prevail in the world.

We must have a just and lasting peace in the Middle East, in the settlement of the Israeli-Arab conflict and the question of Palestine, on the basis of Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973). Gabon wishes to reaffirm its support for these two resolutions and fully endorses the idea of holding an international peace conference on the Middle East, which should lead to negotiations among all the parties concerned.

Along the same lines, Gabon welcomes the prospects opened by the restoration of security in Lebanon.

We must also have a just and lasting peace in Africa where this year the increase in civil war and internal conflict has led to an increase in problems facing the people of our continent. For example, over the past two years the

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daily lives of innocent individuals in Liberia have been profoundly disrupted and many refugees have fled to neighbouring countries. Gabon sincerely hopes that peace will be restored, along with security and stability in that fraternal country. We welcome the efforts made to that end by the member countries of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS).

The same applies to the situation in the Horn of Africa. People in that subregion are helplessly suffering from the effects of shortages of rainfall and conflicts which have set their world afire.

Our concern for peace and security can be seen again in the unreserved support which Gabon has extended to all the efforts undertaken to solve the problem in Angola. It is appropriate here to reiterate the total support of my country for the efforts undertaken on behalf of national reconciliation and, in this connection, to welcome the signing of the Estoril Agreements on 1 May 1991 between the Government of Angola and UNITA, under the auspices of the Portuguese Government.

The conflict in Western Sahara appears to be evolving in a positive way and the Government of Gabon welcomes with satisfaction the adoption by the Security Council of resolution 690 (1991) on the referendum. We believe that this is a decisive stage on the path to a definitive settlement of the conflict.

While welcoming the fact that the three main pillars of apartheid in South Africa have been removed, Gabon has not forgotten that the principle of "one man, one vote", does not yet prevail in the political life of that country. That is why the Gabonese authorities reaffirm their unconditional commitment to this universal principle which South Africa must respect.

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With regard to the latest developments in that country, Gabon welcomes the conclusion of the tripartite peace agreement and appeals to the contracting parties to apply the provisions so that a new democratic and multiracial South Africa can emerge.

A just and lasting peace is also necessary in Asia, particularly in Cambodia and Afghanistan. With regard to Cambodia, in particular, encouraging signs of a return to peace have emerged in recent months. In this respect, we welcome the progress achieved at the Pattaya Conference in Thailand. The process initiated during that meeting to find a peaceful solution should be resolutely pursued so that, at last, a global settlement can be reached guaranteeing the independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity of Cambodia.

In Latin America, Gabon is extending its support to the peace process initiated under the auspices of the United Nations for the restoration of security and stability in that region.

We support a just and lasting peace in Europe, because we are very concerned about the tensions and conflicts which are growing in Central and Eastern Europe and which are endangering international peace and security. Gabon is following very closely the developments taking place in Yugoslavia, a country with which we are still bound by excellent ties of friendship and cooperation. That is why I would like to take this opportunity to welcome the mediation efforts of the European Economic Community to find a peaceful solution to this conflict, because, here as elsewhere, disputes must be solved through dialogue.

Generally speaking, therefore, one could say that the end of the cold war and of the "policy of blocs", which I have just mentioned, should favour the

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restoration of just and lasting peace throughout the world. As the spectre of the confrontation of blocs, which originally gave rise to the accumulation of the most murderous weapons of mass destruction, moves into the background, we can envisage the implementation of the programme of action adopted by the International Conference on the Relationship between Disarmament and Development.

Beyond this regional analysis, a number of problems concern the international community as a whole. Actually, a number of very serious problems still threaten the balance of our planet. For example, just to mention a few, there are the problems of drugs, AIDS and of the detericration of the environment. In the context of the struggle against drugs, my country, with the support of the United Nations and friendly countries, has established a central office to combat drug abuse and a team of toxicologists at Libreville, which is regional in nature. The same is true of the drive to combat AIDS. Gabon, with the assistance of the World Health Organization and the United Nations Development Programme, has prepared a medium-term plan. However, we feel that a global approach to these problems would enable us to find answers to these problems which threaten the future of mankind.

With respect to the environment, the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, which is to be held next June in Brazil, will afford an opportunity to show that our Organization can be effective when it is mobilized for a lofty cause. But here and now, my country, which has one of the largest forest reserves in the world, feels that the solution to environmental problems must take duly into account the requirements of development in all their aspects, and in particular the regional social and economic situation.

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Encouraging measures taken in this way to combat these problems, namely, drugs and AIDS, together with the protection of the environment and the reduction of regional conflicts, cannot be dissociated from efforts to combat the serious disparities which still characterize international economic relations. To date, the economic and social situation of Africa has deteriorated dramatically, despite the many programmes and reforms adopted, for example, the Lagos Plan of Action for the Development of Africa from 1980 to the Year 2000, or the United Nations Programme of Action for the Economic Restructuring and Development of Africa.

The first consequence of this situation is Africa's inability to implement true investment programmes which would help to revitalize its economic growth and development. We need only note the results of the recent work of the Ad Hoc Committee on the Final Review and Appraisal, which did not come up to our expectations. Moreover, international financial institutions have advocated the establishment of structural adjustment programmes. Unfortunately, these entail social costs which have adverse effects for our people. The fact that these programmes are accompanied by social claims related to the liberalization of African political systems, considerably intensifies the difficulties which the Governments of African countries are facing.

The improvement of the economic situation of our continent, therefore, must be achieved through the restructuring of international economic relations, which takes into account not only the interests of the North, but also those of the South, especially the constant decline in the price of commodities and the burning question of the debt.

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That African debt, which today stands in excess of $270 billion, should be the focus of solutions by groups of countries - such as middle-level-income ones - which have so far not been the object of any relief measures. We know that the international community has the necessary resources to do this. The establishment of institutions like the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development of Eastern and Central Europe is eloquent proof of what can be accomplished given determination and political will. Aspects related to rescheduling that debt should also be examined in future consultations.

Indeed, the path that lies before our countries today, the path of greater freedom and democracy, can only buttress the concept expressed in the World Report on Human Development recently issued by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), which recommended

"a participatory form of development in which the human person would be at the heart of the decision-making process."

We wish to state at this stage that the North, which has no interest in seeing Africa marginalized in the new world economic order, must help in its development in order to ensure that the process of democratization under way in our countries may continue and become irreversible.

At the dawn of the next millennium, the challenges of tomorrow's world, like those of today's, must be met by all of us; they require us to coordinate our efforts so that we may draw ever closer to the Organization's goals. This is particularly necessary because new generations will judge us by the way in which we have met the major challenges of today and helped to solve those of tomorrow. In this connection Gabon sincerely hopes that at this session Member States will make a firm commitment to revitalize international cooperation and to strengthen dialogue and peace among nations.

Mrs. de ST. JORRE (Seychelles) (interpretation from French): The Seychelles wishes to extend its congratulations to the President on his unanimous election to preside over the General Assembly at this session. We should also like to extend a welcome to the seven new States Members of the Organization. We take this opportunity too to pay a tribute to the Secretary-General of the United Nations, who has played a decisive role in strengthening the Organization throughout this decade, undoubtedly the most significant decade of the last part of the century. We congratulate him on the timely and judicious initiatives he has constantly taken to make the Organization so credible and so effective.

Since our last meeting here the world has witnessed a number of events that today cause us to have a considerably altered view of international relations. Notwithstanding some persistent hotbeds of tension, the new factors militate in favour of dialogue rather than tests of strength. We see the emergence of an approach based on the notion of consensus which relies on negotiation. We must now learn to talk to each other, to listen to each other - in a word, to use a common language and to make more use than ever before of an effective and generally recognized tool of mediation.

That tool exists today. Over the past months the United Nations has proved that it is not only useful but indispensable. Given the backing and the means for intervention by all nations, the United Nations has finally become the primary institution for management of world law and order. Does this now mean that our appeals repeated year after year in this very Hall have been heeded? It is very comforting for a great many countries to know that their cause will henceforth be heard and defended with the same degree of impartiality and diligence.

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That is why the Seychelles joins all other countries in stating and attesting to its confidence in this institution and in asking that it be given increased powers. I have in mind particularly the role the United Nations should play in imposing strict control over arms sales of all kinds. I also believe that no effort should be spared in supporting the actions undertaken by the United Nations to solve and prevent conflicts wherever they may arise. Similarly, all initiatives designed to promote and defend human rights, all actions designed to ease or systematically eliminate debt and to strengthen structures for cooperation and development of all kinds must be supported by us all, both in word and in deed.

However, this determinedly optimistic overall vision of world management includes the notion of broad-based consultations in which all voices will have an equal importance. On the threshold of the emergence of a new order, a complete embodiment of the San Francisco Charter, we must define now the roles that each of us is called upon to play. For it is obvious that a certain disparity remains between the poles of decision, and in this transitional period from one order to another, we must join in giving thought to producing a universally agreed-upon notion of the emerging new world order.

Of course, all sides have come up with broad principles. They are all intended to be the faithful reflection of the aspirations of peoples, large and small, for a lasting system of international peace, security for mankind and stability for States, without which there can be neither peace nor development. We must also determine what part each will play in the new distribution of responsibilities.

For many of us the establishment of this new order means that we must abandon, at least for the time being, the strictly economic and political

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benchmarks advocated by the previous order in favour of more lasting criteria connected with quality of life and a healthy environment.

We are in complete agreement on that point. However, a new order on a global level entails structural changes, often of a basic nature. It also calls for a change in thinking, a new kind of human behaviour, solidarity free from ethnocentricity, without, of course, prejudicing national cultures and identities. It requires a great deal of effort, time and resources. Thus, my question is: have we the necessary resources that our ambitions for renovation require?

The political and socio-economic changes that must necessarily occur cannot be effected overnight. They demand that suitable democratic institutions be set up and made workable, and they therefore demand time. Above all, they demand that countries be totally sovereign. By that, I mean that they must have a real choice of political and economic options and that, consequently, they must once and for all be freed from the traps of dependency in which they have all too often - often involuntarily - been caught.

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No one escapes history, fashions, trends or even Utopias, and since current thinking is in the direction of political pluralism, let us dwell on that. The gathering power of this idea is reflected by a vast reform movement in relationships among nations. But so far there is no predetermined mould in which we can harmonize all political tendencies.

In the current historical context it is clear that very often countries have to pass through forms of government adapted to the needs of the moment. Everyone agrees, however, in recognizing that the choices and their consequences can be very different from one country to another, that it is unrealistic to fail to take account of the implicit and inevitable factors leading to this or that option. In any case, people dislike seeing their Governments subject to external pressure of any kind. We therefore suggest that, in the establishment of the new system of relationships among States, account be taken of the need and the right of every State to evolve at its own pace and not according to another pace imposed from the outside.

That leads me to turn to the tendentious practice of tying public assistance for development to political demands. If conditional aid can be justified by the need to undertake certain structural adjustments, it is not, however, honest for the stick-and-carrot method to be used to compel Governments to undertake immediate changes with motives that are not always clear vis-à-vis the well-being of their peoples.

In this context, while it might be appropriate in some manner or other to exert influence on certain political tendencies that are not in keeping with the well-being of man or with the process of development overall, it would be preferable by far to help Governments invest more of themselves rather than to impose arbitrary and radical methods. A case-by-case analysis of the

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particular constraints inherent in each country and the search for solutions better adapted to the needs expressed would be a more fitting response towards implementation of the strategies that are required.

The climate of confidence which now seems to prevail among States is itself a response to the interdependence and globalization of the world economy. But, although the current trend is linked to the strengthening of international cooperation in a spirit of equitable partnership, we see that in fact the same relationships of force and inequality prevail. They will continue to prevail until the new criteria for development come to be respected and applied with the necessary care and judiciousness.

That is just a matter of common sense; nevertheless we must note that in spite of the apparent progress in North-South cooperation efforts, concrete exchanges still remain disproportionate. That is why it is essential to formulate at once a lasting strategy for international development capable of universal application as a matter of urgency. New factors favourable to exchanges are discernible today, and it is up to us to take advantage of them.

East-West tensions are now a thing of the past; and ideological antagonisms have been dismantled. There is only one constraining dimension left to take into account. This, of course, is the overall inequality between the North and the South, and for the latter the notion of dependence still overrides the concept which has been much proclaimed, namely, interdependence.

True, with the advent of the new expanded North, new prospects for partnership have opened up in the field of cooperation. It is no doubt here that North-South cooperation can be launched and new solutions found to break the deadlock in which the third world countries find themselves.

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However, in this future of "logical partnership" where competition dominates, there are signs that new losers will emerge if we fail to define right now the sharing of responsibilities at all levels. Development in which everyone participates must be based on the conviction that economic development should no longer take place at the expense of the environment. On behalf of all countries, such as my own, with scant human resources and practically no natural resources, on behalf of all the countries whose economies are extremely vulnerable to external turmoil, we therefore seek a general mobilization to preserve this resource, this invaluable capital which is the world ecological heritage.

In this context, we hope that the Conference on Environment and Development, to be held next year, will have the necessary authority to decide on the appropriate means of managing this resource.

We hope that at that time those countries I shall call the "museums of the world" will be given the necessary means to enable their populations to attain social and economic well-being without nature suffering as a consequence. The Seychelles calls upon all those who would defend the environment to see to it that international cooperation in this new dimension of development is strengthened in a tangible way.

Within this movement which has broken with the past but which in enhancing the value of what has been achieved is preparing for the future, let us pool our efforts. At the dawn of the establishment of a more equitable world where greater solidarity reigns, let us have the courage of our ambitions so that man and nature can really be at the heart of development. May our speeches no longer remain dead letters or be confined to the realm of parody, but at last provide the needed impulse for action.

The PRESIDENT: The Assembly has heard the last speaker in the general debate for this meeting. I shall now call on those representatives who have asked to exercise the right of reply.

May I remind members that, in accordance with General Assembly decision 34/401, statements in exercise of the right of reply are limited to 10 minutes for the first intervention and to five minutes for the second, and should be made by delegations from their seats.

I call first on the representative of Kuwait.

Mr. AL-SALLAL (Kuwait) (interpretation from Arabic): The attempt by the Iraqi regime to justify, by alleged conspiracies which aimed at sabotaging Iraq's economy, the aggression against and occupation of my country is exposed by the fact that during the 1980s Kuwait gave Iraq economic assistance which exceeded $15 billion. It does not stand to reason that we should give such amounts to a country whose economy we were engaged in wrecking.

Iraqi officials of all levels paid continual tributes to Kuwait and its support of their country up to a mere few days prior to Iraq's aggression. When Iraq declared its intentions vis-à-vis Kuwait and began using pretexts to justify aggression, my country proposed that a committee of the League of Arab States be formed at the highest level to arbitrate between the two parties and to discuss Iraqi claims. In our memorandum to the League of Arab States in July 1990, we refuted the claims of the Iraqi regime and detailed its acts of aggression, excesses, its attempts to violate our borders, its forays into Kuwaiti territory and its exploitation of oil wells inside that territory.

I recall all this solely for the sake of history, since the Assembly is clearly aware of the nature of the Iraqi regime and its expansionist aims not only towards Kuwait but also against the region and perhaps the entire world. The Assembly is also aware of the actions taken by Arab leaders before and after the Iraqi aggression against Kuwait. The Assembly tried to dissuade Iraq from its continued occupation, but all these attempts were rebuffed. They were followed by similar efforts on the part of the chairmanship of the Non-Aligned Movement and international personalities. Iraq flagrantly defied international law, which was represented by the resolutions of the Security Council.